

Iran legislators rebuff Rafsanjani

NICOSIA (R) — Cracks appeared in Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani's bedrock parliamentary support Tuesday when the Majlis approved a bill stripping the Interior Ministry of its powers to run municipalities. The bill, a direct challenge to Interior Minister Abdullah Nouri, was the first for Mr. Rafsanjani since a right-centre alliance backing the president defeated radicals in April-May elections. The bill, approved after two votes Sunday and Tuesday, in effect strips the Interior Ministry of its powers in running municipalities, handing them over to 11-member councils. The council in each city is composed of four local officials plus seven members chosen by the city's governor, Majlis deputies and Friday prayer leaders, Tehran Radio said. "If you think this bill will redress the people's rights, you are wrong," Vice-President Asatollah Mottajerani told the Majlis before a majority of deputies attending the session voted for it Sunday. Abar newspaper said the vote was part of a "concerted campaign to put pressure on the interior minister which should be considered a confrontation with Mr. Hashemi Rafsanjani's government."

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political newspaper published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة المنشورة من المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»

Jordan seeks 35% cut on London Club debt

AMMAN (R) — Jordan has asked the London Club of commercial creditors to discount principal on its \$1.2 billion debt by at least 35 per cent and defer those payments for 30 years, an economist close to the Jordanian government said on Tuesday. Finance Minister Basel Jaradneh announced after returning from London Sunday that the two sides had agreed in principle to reduce the debt but details had not yet been worked out. "The Jordanian finance minister is demanding a minimum of 35 per cent discount on principal," Fayed Al Faneek told Reuters. He said Jordan was asking for a 30-year deferral on payment of principal with interest payments on the reduced amount. After that time the Kingdom would make a one-time payment to bankers with a zero-coupon bond, he said. "They are asking for 30 years but will probably settle for twenty," he said, adding that the two sides had agreed to a framework which included unspecified discounts and payment deferrals. He said Jordan had rejected out of hand a proposal by the banks which would reduce interest providing the reduction was capitalised and repaid after 10 years. Dr. Faneek added Mr. Jaradneh had told the bankers that until they reached an agreement the Kingdom would pay only 30 per cent of the interest due.

Two ambassadors sworn in

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, received at the Royal Court Tuesday Assem Quteishat and Ahmad Adaleh, Jordan's ambassadors designate to Sudan and Yemen respectively. The two ambassadors were given directives by the Regent on the need to promote Jordan's relations with the two Arab countries. They were sworn in before Crown Prince Hassan in the presence of the Royal Court Chief Khalid Karaki and acting Foreign Minister Mahmoud Al Sharif.

Sharif Zeld visits France

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeld Ben Shaker left for Europe Tuesday on a private trip expected to last several days, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. Sharif Zeld would cut short his visit and go to Washington if His Majesty King Hussein, recovering there from surgery, holds formal talks with U.S. President George Bush, according to sources quoted by Reuters.

Kakish retained on port's board

AMMAN (Petra) — The Cabinet held a meeting Tuesday under the chairmanship of Deputy Premier and Education Minister Thagoun Al Hindawi and decided to renew the membership of Aqaba Region Authority President Basam Kakish in the board of directors of the Jordanian Ports Corporation. It also approved the formation of Jordan's delegation to the meetings of the Council of Arab Youth and Sports Ministers to be held in Damascus Sept. 5-7. The delegation will be headed by Youth Minister Saleh Al-Risheidat and will include as members Deputy Secretary General Munther Al Humeidi and Abdul Rahman Al Armouti of the ministry.

Swedish team arrives

AMMAN (Petra) — A Swedish parliamentary delegation arrived in Amman Tuesday on a three-day visit to Jordan. The delegation will meet with His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, and will hold talks with senior Jordanian officials on the Middle East peace process and bilateral relations.

Golan Druze on pilgrimage to Syria

TEL AVIV (R) — A group of 185 Druze clerics from the Golan Heights crossed from the Israeli-held land into Syria on pilgrimage Tuesday, the largest crossing by Druze since the Jewish state occupied the Heights in the 1967 war. The International Committee of the Red Cross organised the crossing by the clerics who planned to visit the grave of a Druze holy man, Nabi Abil, near Damascus.

Izzat Ibrahim in Amman hospital

AMMAN (AP) — Izzat Ibrahim, deputy chairman of Iraq's ruling Revolution Command Council, is hospitalised in Jordan after undergoing surgery over the weekend, Jordanian officials said Tuesday. They said that Mr. Ibrahim, a close aide to President Saddam Hussein, was operated on for a hernia Sunday at the King Hussein Medical Centre, one of the most sophisticated medical institutions in the Middle East. "He is doing fine," said a Jordanian official, who insisted on anonymity. "He is recuperating now and should stay at the hospital for one week." Mr. Ibrahim is 54.

U.S. plans \$5b F-15 sale to Saudis

WASHINGTON (R) — The Bush administration has informed some American Jewish leaders that it intends to proceed with a \$5 billion sale of as many as 72 F-15 aircraft to Saudi Arabia, Jewish sources said Tuesday. The sources told Reuters the administration could make an announcement as early as Wednesday.

Hopes fade for quick Jordan-Israel accord on 'common agenda'

Combined agency despatches

JORDAN AND ISRAEL remain far apart after one week of fresh negotiations following the change of government in Israel and need more time to close the gap between their respective viewpoints, the chief Jordanian peace negotiator and the official spokesman said Tuesday. "We listened to the remarks by the Israeli side on what we presented during last week's meeting, thinking that what we presented was enough to close the gap between our points of view," Abdul Salam Majali, head of the Jordanian delegation to the peace talks, told reporters after a round of negotiations Tuesday morning. The main differences centre on Israel's settlement activity in the occupied territories, U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, Dr. Majali said, explaining that Jordan was seeking to include these issues clearly in a common agenda in the peace process. Israeli settlement policies are of great concern to Jordan since they affect its security because as more and more Israeli settlers take over Palestinian lands they evict

the Palestinian owners of the lands to the East Bank, jeopardising Jordan's resources and existence, Dr. Majali said. Dr. Majali denied reports that Israel had accepted to give Jordan its share of Yarmouk River water and said the issue was not on Tuesday's agenda. Noting that experts were discussing the issue, Dr. Majali said in view of Jordan's dire need for water and is deprived of Jordan River water and a large part of Yarmouk water the subject needs thorough discussions. Marwan Muasher, the official spokesman for the Jordanian delegation, said the Israeli delegation had retracted from previous positions and had adopted a tougher stand. The Israelis are rejecting the basic principles on which the Middle East peace process was built and hopes were fading that agreement could be reached this week on the sought-for common agenda, Dr. Muasher said. The Israeli side has assumed a tough posture towards Resolution 242, occupied Jordanian territories and other issues which come under the context of inter-

national legitimacy, Dr. Muasher said, adding that this was not the case last week. "We made our position clear to the Israelis from the very beginning and thought that they had understood our position well and that they were ready to initiate serious negotiations," Dr. Muasher said. "But, it seems, they are not serious about the peace process because they do not want to talk about settlements, nor about Resolution 242," he added. The Israeli side does not even want to recognise that Israel had occupied and annexed some of Jordan's territory, he said. On another front, Palestinians and Israelis are seeking a formula that will enable the creation of specialised groups to discuss what Israel calls the "nitty gritty" of peace. Both sides made clear that while negotiations were stuck, they were not derailed. "We are trying to find an impasse-breaking mechanism or device," Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said. "So

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Israel reports progress made in talks with Syria over Golan

WASHINGTON (Agencies) — Syria, in a move welcomed by Israel, has presented a document in Mideast peace talks outlining its stand on the occupied Golan Heights, a senior Israeli official said Tuesday. While Syria continues to insist on a total Israeli withdrawal from the territory, the document shows "an attempt to take into account our point of view" on some issues, the Israeli official told some reporters. He said Itamar Rabinovich, who heads the Israeli delegation negotiating with Syria, probably will return to Israel over the weekend to consult with top government officials. The round of talks entered its second week Monday. Details of the Syrian document were withheld under an agreement between the two sides. But the official, who asked not to be identified by name, said it dealt with withdrawal of Israeli forces and security, among other issues. "There are elements we like," the official said in giving reports

an optimistic account of Israeli-Syrian negotiations. He said the Israeli side had not raised with Syria such touchy issues as Israel's legitimacy, Syria's growing arsenal of missiles and a partial withdrawal from the Golan Heights. Syria is insisting on a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, the official said. He did not say in what specific way the document is favourable to Israel. The official said a realistic goal for the current sixth round of talks would be an Israeli-Syrian agreement to issue a joint text at the end of the scheduled four weeks of negotiations. While the Shamir government rejected the idea of Israel ever handing back the Golan to Syria, the new Israeli negotiating team under Mr. Rabinovich signalled at the outset it was prepared to talk about withdrawal from at least part of the strategic plateau. Syria presented its first detailed document in the talks at Monday's session and Mr. Rabinovich

said Tuesday it formed an acceptable basis for discussion. The sides have agreed to a four or five-day adjournment at the end of this week to consult with their governments. Mr. Rabinovich is an academic best known for a book about missed opportunities in Syrian-Israeli relations in the past. His appearance has immediately lowered the rhetorical level of the talks to the extent that Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa was quoted at the weekend as "describing the atmosphere as 'reasonable'." Worries on Lebanese elections The United States is trying to insulate the Arab-Israeli peace talks from the effects of elections in Lebanon, which threaten to radicalise the country and widen the split between Christians and Muslims. A senior Bush administration

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Mediators optimistic on Libyan crisis

JAKARTA (R) — United Nations and Arab League chiefs said on Tuesday progress had been made towards settling Libya's dispute with the West over its refusal to hand over airliner bombing suspects. "A measure of progress has been made toward the implementation of Security Council Resolution 731 which will contribute to the resolution of the dispute," U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali told the Non-Aligned Movement summit which opened in the Indonesian capital Jakarta. He did not elaborate. Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi, who has stayed away from the summit, called on Monday night for direct talks with the United States to solve the dispute. His delegation in Jakarta was not immediately available for comment. "We (Libya) will not surrender whatever the pressures," Colonel Qaddafi vowed in a nationally televised speech marking the 23rd anniversary of his Sept. 1, 1969 military coup that toppled the

NAM seeks to adapt to post-cold war world

JAKARTA (R) — Non-aligned nations began a key summit Tuesday to adapt their movement to the post-cold war era and lift themselves out of the poverty which U.N. chief Boutros Ghali called the last challenge of the century. Indonesian President Suharto, opening the 10th summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), told its 108 members they must rely on their own efforts and not just the West to achieve prosperity. "If a country desires development for its people it should strive to bring its own house in order," he told heads of state and government at a new \$100 million convention centre. "A nation must not depend on others for its own development." Dr. Ghali, who became U.N. secretary-general this year, said that despite the collapse of the Soviet bloc and the end of East-West confrontation, non-alignment was just as important as when the movement was founded 31 years ago. "We could go even further and say that your enterprise is constantly becoming more topical and modern," he said. Apparently referring to U.S. President George Bush's call for a new world order, he said there

could be "no sustainable world order without the eradication of poverty," a task he termed "the last challenge we must take up at the close of the century." Like Mr. Suharto, he urged poor countries not to blame others. Development, he said, was inseparable from peace and democracy. "One cannot point a finger at anyone in particular, because this has been a collective responsibility." The non-aligned countries had focused too late on economic problems and their past cries for a "new world economic order" had fallen victim to the ideological rows of the cold war. The comments of the two men underlined attempts by host Indonesia and others to push the movement away from the confrontation of the past and give it new relevance. But Mr. Suharto also urged industrial nations to help developing countries, which have an estimated \$1.3 trillion in outstanding foreign debt. He pointed to the need for debt relief and for the West and Japan to reduce import tariffs, and highlighted fears that eastern Europe will divert aid from other needy regions.

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King meets delegation to talks

HIS MAJESTY King Hussein Tuesday met with the Jordanian delegation to the Arab-Israeli peace talks currently under way in Washington and underlined the need to remain firm on the Kingdom's stands vis-a-vis the requirements of a just and durable peace in the Middle East, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said. The delegation visited the King at his residence in Washington, where he arrived after leaving the Mayo

Clinic in Minnesota earlier this week. At the Mayo Clinic he underwent a successful surgery to remove a tumour from his urinary tract. The Jordanian delegation to the peace talks, headed by Abdul Salam Majali, congratulated the King on the success of the surgery and wished him a speedy recovery. The King reassured the delegation on his good health and said he was improving

daily. The King told the delegation that he was overwhelmed by the concern expressed by the people of Jordan over his health and asked that his greetings and appreciation be conveyed in them. Petra reported. Dr. Majali briefed the King on the progress of the peace talks, which resumed Aug. 24 and are rescheduled to last four weeks, the agency added.

Shbeilat arrested in connection with Nafeer group case

By Sana Atiyeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prominent independent Islamist Deputy Laith Shbeilat was detained for questioning by the state security prosecutor Monday night and could face charges for allegedly assisting an illegal militant Islamic group. An order for his detention was made after alleged testimonies by accused members of the group that they had used his car to transport weapons and explosives. Mr. Shbeilat's detention came a few days after the arrest of his close associate, Deputy Yaroub Qarashi, who is accused of heading an organisation called "Shabab Al Nafeer Al Islami (Vanguard of Islamic Youth)" allegedly planning to use illegal arms against the state. Both deputies share the same office and are

known to be affiliated with a spiritual Sufi group known as "Dar Al Koran." No official statement was released concerning Mr. Shbeilat's detention. Although the Amman deputy was not charged, official sources were quoted by the BBC as saying that they expected to charge him for assisting — whether intentionally or unintentionally — the banned group by providing his car for transporting illegal arms and explosives aimed against the state. Mr. Shbeilat's lawyer, Ibrahim Bakr, said he had requested bail to be set for the deputy's release but had not yet been granted. He told the Jordan Times Tuesday that bail was rarely granted when the detention was done for investigative purposes, but hoped he would receive special permission for his release.

"Knowing Laith as I do, I strongly doubt he would be involved with arms and explosives," Mr. Bakr said in a telephone interview. Mr. Shbeilat was arrested at his home at 10:30 p.m. after the officials from the state prosecutor's office searched his home for an hour and half, according to his wife, Rima. His office in Shmeisani was also searched Monday afternoon, and police confiscated a box-full of video tapes, documents and cassettes, according to his associates. Mrs. Shbeilat said that the search at home was conducted in a very "polite and civilised" manner. Informal sources said they confiscated Mr. Shbeilat's two personal guns. Mrs. Shbeilat told the Jordan Times that she was sure her husband was not involved with any illegal armed organisation. "He



Laith Shbeilat knows nothing about his car being used to transport arms, as he is being accused of," Mrs. Shbeilat told the Jordan Times. "He lends his car to anyone who needs it." The deputy's wife insisted that "ulterior motives" were behind Mr. Shbeilat's arrest "in order to

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Rightists to boost challenge to Lebanon elections

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanon's Christians, long opposed to Syria's historic say in the country, are trying to join ranks to boost resistance against controversial elections dominated by pro-Damascus candidates, political sources said Tuesday. George Saadeh, head of the Christian Falange Party, said his group was leading efforts to form a broad national front to tackle the election crisis, the worst since the end of the 1975 to 1990 civil war. The Christians, who boycotted the first two rounds of the poll, say the elections are a ploy by Syria to strengthen its grip over the country. Official results of voting held on Aug. 23 and Sunday showed that the majority of the candidates who won were close to Syria, while the rest were Muslim fundamentalists. "We are trying to establish a broad Christian-Muslim political front that would fill the deficiency of the legal institutions and reform its malfunctions which resulted from the massive boycotting of the elections," Mr. Saadeh said. "The problem cannot be left unsolved because it is a threat to existence of the country," said the leader of the Falange, the largest Christian group. Delegates of various Christian opposition groups were to meet Tuesday at the seat of Maronite Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir, a strong opponent of the elections. They were to discuss the polls which damaged the fragile reconciliation between Muslims and Christians after two years of peace. One political source said the delegates would talk about escalating "democratic resistance" against the elections. The last stage of voting is due to take place in the south Sunday. Pro-Syrian candidates are also expected to win. The sources said members of the outgoing legislative body, some of whom lost in the recent voting, were trying to find a constitutional way to declare the polls illegal.

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Iraqi dissidents want to fill allies-made 'vacuum' in south

Combined agency despatches

IRAQI SHIITE opposition groups called on allies Tuesday to return to southern Iraq where the United States and its allies have set up an air umbrella to protect dissidents from the Iraqi army. The Damascus-based Islamic Action Organisation and the Da'wa group said Shiite exiles should return to the south "to fill the political and administrative gap created by the regime's gradual absence from the area." The two Shiite groups urged Iraqi government officials and members of the armed forces to join a rebellion aimed at removing from power President Saddam Hussein. The Islamic Action Organisation and Da'wa took part in last year's abortive post-Gulf war rebellion which was crushed. Iraq's defence minister, on a

tour of the "no-fly zone" in the south, wants to "mobilise the masses" against what he called a conspiracy to dismember the country, Baghdad newspaper said. Ali Hassan Al Majeed's comments were part of a government campaign to muster support for whatever course of action it intends to take against the exclusion zone south of the 32nd Parallel. But no war preparations were visible in the Iraqi capital and army Chief of Staff Iyad Al Rawi has denied allegations by U.S. National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft that Iraq was planning a ground attack against the Shiites. Iraq has not mobilised its popular army a lightly armed militia force, disbanded in the Gulf war aftermath. President Saddam Hussein has vowed to challenge the impos-

tion of the zone but said he would decide how and when to act. The "no-fly" zone was established last week by the United States and two of its Gulf war allies, Britain and France. "The Iraqi people... will defeat the conspiracy hatched by imperialist and Zionist circles to dismember Iraq," the newspapers quoted Mr. Majeed as saying. They said he called for "the enlisting of all potentials in mobilise the masses to foil enemy schemes." Mr. Majeed and senior Ba'ath Party officials have been touring the southern province below the 32nd Parallel to seek support for plans to confront what Iraq describes as "the West's dirty plan." National television has shown daily scenes of marsh Arab tribesmen brandishing rifles shouting anti-U.S. slogans and swearing

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Executing merchants is right, Iraqi planning minister says

AMMAN (R) — Iraq was right to execute merchants accused of profiteering despite reports that their deaths have frightened other traders into halting food imports, an Iraqi government minister said Tuesday. Planning Minister Samal Majeed Faraj said the executions were beneficial to Iraq as a deterrent to other would-be offenders. They were justified because Iraq was suffering the harshest sanctions ever imposed on any country, Mr. Faraj added. Iraq began cracking down in July on merchants accused of raising prices to profit from the sweeping U.N. trade ban imposed on Baghdad. Diplomats said 42 traders were executed. "Certainly when we prevent such practices that violate the law this is something good," Mr. Faraj told Reuters when asked about reports that the executions caused a sharp drop in food shipments from Jordan, Iraq's supply lifeline. "When anyone who violates the law is punished others will think that there are punishments which will be imposed on them

and they avoid illegal matters," he said. Wholesalers in Jordan, the transit point for most of Iraq's food imports, have said many Iraqi merchants have stopped trading, terrified of suffering the same fate. Mr. Faraj, in Jordan for a conference of the U.N.'s Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), did not exclude the possibility of further executions. Asked if he thought more traders would be executed in the war on profiteers, he said: "It is not our intention to impose (unjustified) punishment on anyone and we do not intend in the future to impose any punishments on those who follow the law." Iraq was trying to become self-reliant by increasing agricultural production and developing food industries rather than depending on massive imports, he added. He said he believed there would eventually be a thaw between Baghdad and the Gulf states which went to war against it after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Army jets attack Hekmatyar positions

KABUL (R) — Army jets bombed a rebel airbase in western Afghanistan Tuesday while the brokers of a ceasefire in the capital said they were putting together a buffer force to separate the two sides outside shell-shattered Kabul. The buffer force would be stationed in the southern and eastern suburbs, pounded to virtual rubble in three weeks of bloody battles between the Islamic coalition government and the dissident Hezb-e-Islami party. "We will put them in those places where face-to-face fighting has taken place," said Engineer Mahmood, deputy leader of a neutral peace mission that negotiated Saturday's ceasefire. Government MiG jets broke the ceasefire early on Tuesday with a series of raids in which they dropped hundreds of bombs on the Hezb-held western Shindand air base, the Mjahideen Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) reported from Pakistan.

Tehran said refusing Abu Musa compromise

ABU DHABI (R) — Iran has effectively annexed a small Gulf island it jointly controlled with the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for the past 20 years, Gulf diplomats said.

They said Tehran was refusing to compromise over the island of Abu Musa, lying about half-way between the UAE and the Iranian coast.

Iranian police on Abu Musa, controlled jointly with the UAE sheikhdom of Sharjah, last week turned back a passenger ferry after holding it in port for three days.

This was the first interference with civilian traffic since Iranians were allowed on the island in 1971 under an agreement negotiated by Britain, then in charge of the foreign relations of the seven "Trucial States" which later formed the UAE.

"This is creeping annexation. It looks like it is entering its final stages," one diplomat said.

Iran said bluntly on Aug. 25 that Abu Musa was an Iranian island and that it had every right to control foreigners' entry.

The UAE has been restrained in its response to the actions of its powerful neighbour to the north, limiting public statements to publicising the plight of the 104 passengers of the ferry. They included about a dozen UAE nationals.

Iran said Sharjah residents in Abu Musa were free to come and go as they wished but others needed Iranian permits.

The diplomats said contacts with Tehran since the ferry was turned back on Aug. 24 had produced no results.

"Tehran is treating the island as purely Iranian territory. It seems that it is refusing to talk about anything unless its sovereignty is recognised," he added.

"This is an example of strong-arm tactics that is likely to increase suspicions of Iran on the Arab side of the Gulf," one Western diplomat said.

An Arab diplomat described it as a setback for efforts to improve ties between Iran's Muslim fundamentalist rulers and the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, which groups the UAE with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman.

These had improved markedly since pragmatic President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani came to power three years ago and after Iran's opposition to the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990. GCC Assistant Secretary-General Seif Al Maskari was quoted on Tuesday as saying that "such irresponsible behaviour was likely to reflect itself very

negatively on GCC-Iran ties ... and create an atmosphere of lack of confidence and tension."

The island is of little importance. Iran and Sharjah share income from a small offshore oilfield.

Western diplomats say Tehran's move is probably prompted by military and strategic concerns as Abu Musa is close to the main tanker channel through the Gulf. Iran is a major exporter of oil through the waterway.

The UAE government alerted the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council when Iranian police last April deported foreign workers who operated the island's power station, police post and school.

UAE Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah Al Naiani visited Tehran soon afterwards but his talks with Mr. Rafsanjani were fruitless. No other formal talks have taken place since, the diplomat said.

The ferry, which was turned back on Aug. 24, carried mainly Egyptian teachers coming back after the summer break to organise school examinations. Pupils from Sharjah had to travel to the mainland to take their tests two days ago.

The diplomats said that Iranian police, who had previously dealt only with Iranian residents on Abu Musa, started to exercise authority over the rest of the island after April.

This was confirmed by returning residents who said last week that Iranian police were checking identity cards and insisting that residents obey Iranian laws.

The Sharjah-based Al Khaleej newspaper has likened the new Iranian actions on Abu Musa to the expansionist policies of the Shah of Iran who claimed the island. The Shah's troops occupied two other islands in 1971, the Lesser and Greater Tumbas which belonged to another UAE sheikhdom Ras Al Khaimah.

The 1971 agreement, which Britain pushed through at the height of the then Labour government's rush to withdraw troops from east of Suez, allowed Iran to station troops on Abu Musa while maintaining Sharjah's control of the rest of the island.

The two sides said in the agreement that neither had dropped its claim to sovereignty over the whole island. But neither had challenged the status quo until this year, the diplomats said.

The diplomats said that the agreement did not have a time limit, but the Shah demanded at the time that it should have a 20-year lifespan. Neither Sharjah nor the UAE later accepted such a time limit, they added.



REGENT MEETS DELEGATION: His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, Tuesday meets a delegation which visited His Majesty King Hussein in the U.S. two weeks ago (see page 3)

Grey porridge saves thousands in Somalia

MOGADISHU (R) — It's grey, lumpy and uninviting but it's saving thousands of lives.

Wherever relief agencies are fighting starvation, a special high-protein porridge called unmix is high on their list of emergency supplies.

"It would be a good baby food at any time, but in this case it's a life-saver," said Aberra Bekele, a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) nutritionist in famine-hit Somalia.

Hundreds of people are dying every day in the Horn of Africa country, victims of drought, civil war and armed gangs who loot relief supplies. Aid workers say some 4.5 million Somalis risk starvation, of whom at least 1.5 million are in desperate need.

Unmix is a vital element in world efforts to save them.

Developed by relief experts for severely malnourished children whose shrivelled bodies cannot absorb normal food, it contains grain, sugar, oil and ground peas, beans, maize or lentils.

The whitish flour is mixed with hot water into a thick and easily-digestible gruel packed with calories to give energy and protein to rebuild wasted bodies.

It tastes better than it looks — similar to oat porridge.

The simple ingredients can be adjusted according to availability. Supplies ferried into Somalia from neighbouring Kenya are made from maize and beans, but Mr. Bekele said it could just as easily contain wheat or sorghum and peas.

Martens says Somalia aid workers need guards

NAIROBI (R) — Former Belgian Prime Minister Wilfried Martens has called for the swift deployment of armed U.N. guards in starving Somalia saying lawlessness there could drive aid workers away.

"Emergency operations are at risk and all private agencies, all relief volunteers could leave Somalia if security continues to be such a big problem," Mr. Martens said after a fact-finding mission to Somalia and refugee camps in northern Kenya.

"We must take measures to avoid such a catastrophe. My conviction is that guards, whatever the number approved by the U.N., must be armed and deployed in Somalia soonest possible."

The Horn of African nation has been reduced to anarchy by months of clan-based factional fighting accompanied by drought and famine which have killed tens of thousands of people.

An Egyptian and a Czech saying with a 50-member armed observer team assisting with U.N. relief operations in Somalia were wounded in an attack on Friday.

Secretary-General Bantros Ghali said he would send additional U.N. security personnel to Mogadishu. On Friday, the Security Council called for the dispatch of 3,000 troops, on top of 500 Pakistani soldiers due in the Somali capital shortly.

Mr. Martens, now a senator and minister of state, said he had never seen "a tragedy of these proportions" all his life.

He said he would put his findings to the Congress of European Christian democratic Parties, of which he is current president, and other international agencies to pressure governments to act faster to salvage the situation.

Hundreds of people are dying daily and another million could starve to death in the next few months. About a million others have fled the country — two-thirds of them into Kenya.

Mr. Martens said it was necessary that the U.N. and individual governments maintain and strengthen their relief efforts for Somalia "in the coming months at whatever cost."

"I saw children waiting to die without aid and no possibility of reaching hospital. I saw other children fold and die in their mothers' arms," Mr. Martens told a packed news conference.

"It was a tragic visit."

Mr. Martens said refugees crowded into camps in northern Kenya faced severe misery and their pain was "indescribable."

"In one camp, barely three square kilometres live some 5,000 of refugees. They lead a life of hopelessness and misery. Health facilities are scarce and they are severely malnourished."

Kuwaiti woman released on bail in Dhaka

DHAKA (R) — The relatives of a Kuwaiti woman who fled to Bangladesh to marry her family's former chauffeur after a long love affair have applied to the Bangladesh high court to have her extradited.

The court Monday granted bail to Bathia Eissa Hamad Al Anezy, 25, and her Bangladeshi husband Ali Ahmad.

Police said the couple were arrested at the home of the man on Sunday following the Kuwait embassy's extradition request made on behalf of the bride's relatives.

A two-member high court bench, comprising Justice Anwarul Haq Chowdhury and Justice K.M. Hassan, granted them bail and ordered police to send them back to Mr. Ahmad's home to live as a married couple.

They will be called back to the court if their presence is required for further hearing of the case, court sources said.

The court will decide whether charges by Ms. Anezy's family that "she married violating Kuwaiti laws and that Mr. Ahmad" enticed her to an illegal love affair "are acceptable and will then rule on the extradition request."

Ms. Anezy, 25, arrived in Bangladesh on Aug. 14, three days after Mr. Ahmad returned home on expiry of his job contract, members of his family told reporters.

The woman said that they were lovers for years and that she had "fled" to Bangladesh to marry Mr. Ahmad. The couple were married under Sharia law a week later.

Soon after the Kuwaiti embassy told Dhaka's Foreign Ministry that Ms. Anezy's family wanted her immediate extradition because Kuwait laws did not permit marriage with foreigners.

The embassy said Ms. Anezy's uncle and several other relatives had flown to Dhaka to try to take her home.

The Foreign Ministry referred the matter to the Home (Interior) Ministry which ordered police to pick up the couple and "submit them before the court."

Mr. Ahmad's father, Nur Ahmad, said Ms. Anezy refused to return to Kuwait or divorce her husband.

"She has been a nice and beautiful bride. We did not have any problem in accepting her in our farming family," he told reporters.

Gulf casts shadow over Arabs at NAM summit

JAKARTA (R) — Key Arab leaders stayed away from a Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit which opened on Tuesday — another sign that the wounds of the Gulf war are far from healing. "Do not forget our POWs" (prisoners of war said to be held in Iraq), appealed a message on the plane that brought Kuwait's Emir Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah to the same meeting as his Iraqi arch-enemies.

Sheikh Jaber, Bahrain's Emir Sheikh Isa Ben Salman Al Khalifa, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat were the only Arab leaders who showed up on the first day of the six-day summit, a forum in the past for bringing Arabs together on regional and international issues.

"The war has ended but the wounds are still too deep to heal," said a senior Arab delegate.

"Many have stayed away simply to avoid shaking hands with each other. And I think it is unlikely there will be any Arab meeting on the sidelines of the summit," he told Reuters.

Arab leaders have failed to meet since a summit in Cairo immediately after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait. The meeting ended bitterly divided between supporters and opponents of foreign intervention to liberate the oil-rich emirate.

Many of them abruptly cancelled plans to attend a summit of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Dakar last December when they learned that Senegalese President Abdou Diouf was trying to arrange an Arab reconciliation.

Iraq has accused Saudi Arabia and Egypt of becoming "puppets" in the hands of the big powers — the United States, Britain and France, who are enforcing a "no-fly" zone in southern Iraq.

"These big powers are working to intensify inter-Arab hostility and thereby killing and chance for a dialogue between us Arabs," an Iraqi delegate said. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein announced in July he would not attend, blaming U.N. sanctions which ban most flights to Iraq. He sent Vice-President Taha Yassin Ramadan, who promises to reveal the aim of the latest "U.S.-led conspiracy and aggression."

Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi has not disclosed his reasons for absencing himself but separate U.N. sanctions also bar flights to his country.

Some delegates said leaders like King Fahd of Saudi Arabia stayed away because they felt the Non-Aligned Movement was no longer relevant in the post-cold war era.

"Gulf Arab leaders are not that keen on a movement that includes so many poor countries in need of financial help," one delegate said.

"They feel the movement has failed to resolve the (1980-88) first Gulf war between two important members (Iran and Iraq) and has failed again in the second Gulf war," he said.

Rabbi says 936 Syrian Jews left after travel rules eased

DAMASCUS (AP) — About 1,000 Syrian Jews have left the country since President Hafez Al Assad's government eased travel restrictions on its Jewish citizens, Syria's chief rabbi said Monday.

Applications for passports and exit permits, a requirement for every Syrian citizen wishing to travel abroad, are being processed daily, Rabbi Ibrahim Hamra told reporters who visited him in the Jewish quarter of Damascus.

He said 936 Jews, nearly one-fourth of the 4,000-strong community, have left for good since the special restrictions were lifted in mid-April.

"Just a few," he replied when asked if others had left and returned. He would not give a number.

Officially, all Syrian citizens may not emigrate. Like other Syrians, Jews also are still banned from travelling to Israel.

To circumvent the first barrier, many of those leaving buy round-trip plane tickets.

Rabbi Hamra ruled out the suggestion that departing Syrian Jews would go to Israel.

"The overwhelming majority expect to go to Brooklyn (New York) where there is a large contingent of Syrian Jews. A few others are going to Paris or London," said Rabbi Hamra, who also is president of the country's Jewish Community Council.

"Most of the Jews left either to get married or to seek better work opportunities," he told reporters. "But to live in the United States is a difficult proposal. It's a totally new life there."

Rabbi Hamra said he hoped that the U.S.-sponsored Middle East peace process would bear fruit and settle the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Israeli image-makers trade bad news for good

By Jack Redden
Reuters

TEL AVIV — After years of Israeli feuding with the media, the new government of Yitzhak Rabin is trying to use news to improve its image and put pressure on the Arabs.

"The new government is less confrontational in all areas — with the press as well," said Yossi Olmert, the former head of the government press office who lost his job after Mr. Rabin took power in July.

Instead of protesting that media coverage of Israel is negative — a legacy of Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon and its efforts to crush the Palestinian revolt that began in 1987 — Israeli authorities have tried to provide positive news.

The army on Monday released about 300 Palestinian prisoners and removed some barriers blocking roads in Bethlehem.

In both cases, foreign journalists were invited to cover the measures, which were described as efforts to improve the atmosphere for the Washington peace talks.

Plans to take these steps were announced earlier this month, timed for maximum impact one day before the talks resumed.

NEWS ANALYSIS

The next day, at the precise minute the talks opened, the defence ministry — which Mr. Rabin also heads — announced it was dropping an order to expel 11 Palestinians issued by the former government of Yitzhak Shamir last January.

Israeli negotiators, abandoning the headline views of previous governments, portray themselves as anxious for a quick settlement and willing to compromise to get it.

"The Israelis are trying to be very professional and not

at all confrontational," said Mr. Olmert, who took part in the heated exchanges that dominated previous sessions of the peace talks which began last October.

The Palestinians, used to favourable comparisons with the inflexible Shamir, appear to have been thrown on the defensive. Now it is the Israeli side complaining of inaction and stalling.

"The reality is they waste time on questions we view as unimportant while Israel started the process with gestures and is ready to immediately get into substance," Hausing Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said on Sunday.

Palestinians say the gestures have been relatively minor — a few hundred prisoners released when about 10,000 are in jail.

Sentences have been reduced only by a maximum of a few months — some ex-prisoners say they were actually held beyond comple-

tion of sentences to inflate the numbers.

The gestures certainly show a concern with public relations, itself a change from the indifference or antagonism to foreign reporting that often marked relations with the media under the Shamir government.

"This is not a goodwill gesture," Adam Abu Eita said in Gaza on Monday after he was released 45 days early.

"This is just a political play," he said. When the Israeli army buzzed journalists into the Gaza Strip last week to record the demolition of a barrier it had built across an alley, one 22-year-old resident said bitterly: "They're laughing at us."

While one stack of barrels came tumbling down in front of the 25 journalists, another one across the street was untouched. Soldiers outnumbered local residents.

"It's show business," said 27-year-old Ahmad Abu Kater.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 77311-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	Le Monde est a vous
18:15	News in French
18:30	Interpreting
18:45	News in Hebrew
19:00	News in Arabic
19:15	Saved by the Bell
19:30	Peterson
19:45	Man of the People
20:00	News in English
20:15	The Good Guys
PRAYER TIMES	
06:46	Fajr
06:06	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
12:36	Dhuhr
16:11	Asr
19:05	Maghrib
20:27	Isha
CHURCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swellish, Tel. 810740	
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 632785	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 634390	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	
Terzian Church Tel. 622366	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	
Anglican Church Tel. 630851, Tel. 628543	
Assiuta Catholic Church Tel. 713371	
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 772561	
Assiuta International Church Tel. 683326	
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811285	
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Tel. 823024, 654922	
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.	
It will continue to be hot and windy with mostly light to moderate. In Asquba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.	
Min./Max. temp.	
Amman	23 / 38
Asquba	28 / 43
Deserts	20 / 40
Jordan Valley	26 / 42
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 37, Asquba 42. Humidity readings:	

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Farouq Noor	786680
Dr. Zein Zoghbi	638591
Dr. Joseph Smith	770560
Dr. Nidal Issa	691011
First pharmacy	661912
Perdows pharmacy	778336
Al Asara pharmacy	637025
Nairoukh pharmacy	623672
Al Salam pharmacy	636730
Yacoub pharmacy	644945
Shweikan pharmacy	637660
REDD:	
Dr. Mohammed Tawal	(—)
Al Shamsa pharmacy	(273825)
ZARQA:	
Dr. Abdul Karim Khassanbeh	(—)
Khalifah pharmacy	983417
EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Civil Defence Immediate	
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Rescue Police	192, 621111, 637177
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	773121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	896390
Public Security Department	630321
Police Complaints	625200
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	630321
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information (directory assistance)	121
Overseas Calls	010230
Central Amman Telephone	
Repair	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	774111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200

QUEEN ALIA Intl. Airport..... 06-53210

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre..... 813813/332
Khald Al Mamouny, J. Amn..... 644281/6
Abdul Mawla, J. Amn..... 65-54172
Jabel Amman Maternity..... 623262
Cemil, J. Amman..... 636140
Palatium, Shamsien..... 666171/4
Shamsien Hospital..... 693131
University Hospital..... 845455
Al-Mustaher Hospital..... 697279
The Islamic, Abadai..... 666127/7
Al-Abi, Abadai..... 666154/6
Itkhan, Al-Mubarakun..... 777101/3
Al-Basir, J. Aftorian..... 775111/26
Army, Marai..... 691611/5
Queen Alia Hospital..... 602204/50
Amal Hospital..... 674155

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital..... (09)583323
Zarqa Central Hospital..... (09)500350
Bin Shams Hospital..... 6978732
Al Hikmah Modern Hospital..... (09)70930

IRBID:
Prinzess Betina Hospital
Govt. Cestina Hospital..... (02)727255
Govt. Al Naifin Hospital..... (02)72725
AQABA:
..... (02)64710

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (02)53200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00	Aden (RJ)
06:30	Doha, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
06:45	Larnaca (RJ)
07:00	Damascus (RJ)
07:30	Doha, Bahrain (RJ)
07:45	Tunis, Comoros (RJ)
08:00	Istanbul (RJ)
08:15	New Delhi (RJ)
08:30	Abu Dhabi (RJ)
08:45	Colombo (RJ)
09:00	Damascus (RJ)
09:15	London (RJ)
09:30	Paris (RJ)
09:45	Frankfurt, Germany (RJ)
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23:30	Amman (RJ)
23:45	Amman (RJ)
24:00	Amman (RJ)

Heat wave continues

AMMAN (J.T.) — The heat wave affecting the country for last three days is expected to gradually recede by Friday evening, the Department of Meteorology said Tuesday.

A department official told the Jordan Times that temperatures which soared to 37.5 degrees Celsius Tuesday will go up to 38 degrees Wednesday and the heat wave will continue through Friday.

He said that due to a high depression east of the Black Sea, a hot air mass has been created in the east, causing very hot winds to blow towards the eastern Mediterranean region from the northern Arabian peninsula, the Gulf and Iraq, causing a noticeable temperature rise.

Ensur ends visit to Syria

AMMAN (Petra) — Industry and Trade Minister Abdullah Ensour Tuesday returned home from Damascus at the end of a several day visit to Syria during which he met with Syrian Prime Minister Mahmoud Al Zuhri and senior Syrian officials.

Dr. Ensour held talks with the Syrian Deputy Prime Minister Salim Yasin, Minister of Economy and Trade, Mohammad Al Imadi and Minister of Industry Ahmad Nizamuddin, on means of enhancing economic cooperation between both countries.

Railway corporation reports losses

By Elia Nasrallah
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The Aqaba Railway Corporation (ARC) has lost an estimated amount of JD 1.05 million in the first eight months of 1992, ARC sources have said.

An ARC spokesman told the Jordan Times that "due to the restrictions on Aqaba-bound shipping and outward going vessels, less and less cargo vessels have been docking in Aqaba to take away Jordan's phosphate," which is mainly transported to the Red Sea port by the ARC trains.

The warehouses holding the phosphate in Aqaba are "full to the brim and cannot take up more phosphate until more vessels arrive and take away the stored quantities at the port," said the official.

Only two trains laden with phosphate now make the daily trip from the Aqaba and Hassa phosphate mines in southern Jordan to the port of Aqaba down from 10 before the Gulf crisis because there is no room in Aqaba to keep the mineral rock," said the official.

ARC Director General Mohammad Kreihan said in a statement that the corporation's trains transported 1,069,650 tonnes of phosphate in the first quarter of 1992, 14 per cent less than planned. He said that in the second quarter of 1992, the trains transported 804,030 tonnes, 33 per cent less than planned.

The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) also reported



An ARC train is being loaded with phosphate at Al Abd Mine in south Jordan (file photo)

losses on its sales of the mineral in 1991 operations, noting that it had exported 4.3 million tonnes, down from 6.4 million in 1989 and 4.9 million tonnes in 1990.

The net sales of JPMC in 1991 reached JD 218.6 million, down from JD 232.5 million in 1990.

In its report about the decline in sales, the JPMC primarily blamed the political and economic changes in Eastern Europe in the past two years which, it said, have adversely reflected on Jordan's phosphate exports. Jordan exported 2032.03 million tonnes to Eastern Europe in 1989, dropping to 0.67 million in 1991, the report said.

The decline in exports also brought sales to Western Europe down from 440,000 tonnes in 1989 to 260,000 tonnes in 1991

and Asian countries from 4.03 million tonnes in 1989 to 3.29 million tonnes in 1991.

According to the International Fertiliser Association (IFA), the international market for raw phosphate exports will not exceed 37 million tonnes a year until the end of this century, down from 52 million tonnes during the early 1980s.

The ARC official said that although part of the phosphate from the mines used to be transported by trucks, the main burden was and still is on the ARC trains. He said the corporation has not started transporting phosphate from the main Shideh Mine in southern Jordan this year due to lack of facilities to keep the minerals at Aqaba warehouses.

Regent receives King's well-wishers

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, received the Jordanian delegation, which visited King Hussein in Mayo Clinic in Rochester to congratulate him on his recovery from the surgery.

The delegation, which was headed by Lower House of Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat, returned home Monday.

Prince Hassan thanked the delegation members for their initiative.

Dr. Arabiyat said in a statement following arrival in Amman that the surgery which the King underwent was successful and its results were excellent, and conveyed to the Jordanian people the greetings of King Hussein.

He said doctors at Mayo Clinic briefed the delegation on the King's health condition and affirmed to them that the case was discovered in its very early stages.

The delegation included Deputy Prime Minister and Education Minister Thouqan Al Hindawi, Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Izzeddin Al Khatib Al Tamimi and several members of the Upper and Lower Houses of Parliament.

Government to adopt new measures to ensure adherence to regulations

Audit Bureau report to be carefully examined

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Tuesday instructed government ministries and departments to carefully examine the findings of an Audit Bureau report on government offices' violations of administrative and financial regulations.

The report on government departments violations and other excesses between 1987 and 1989, which was approved by Parliament on Aug. 16, revealed that some departments owe JD 531 million to the Finance Ministry.

The report also said that government departments had no numerous occasions ignored the bureau's advice and criticism for their actions. The Audit Bureau is charged with controlling financial matters in government departments.

In order to control "administrative and financial matters in public offices, all ministries and official departments are requested to heed the Audit Bureau's report and the Parliament's decisions on it, and to take appropriate measures to address legal, administrative and financial matters and avoid violations and excesses," said the Prime Minister in a circular issued Tuesday.

Following are the prime minister's instructions:

— Ministries and government departments will:

— Finalise the formation of internal control units in one



Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker

month; and set up a committee chaired by the Finance Ministry's secretary general to work out a unified programme for the units of various departments. The Audit Bureau should follow up the implementation of this order.

The Finance Ministry will work out a unified and advanced system for the purchase of various requirements needed by government offices and will draw up principles and rules for warehouses on how to dispense with the purchased items. A report on this matter should be submitted to the prime Minister in two months.

The Finance Ministry will modernise rules for collecting state funds in a manner that would best safeguard the state's rights and simplify routine work. The ministry will also request the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs and the Environment to modernise municipalities laws to help achieve the same goal.

The Finance Ministry will work out a unified system for

public institutions which have a degree of administrative and financial independence.

All government departments and public institutions will submit to the Prime Ministry a report about all the debts due to them with proposals on ways to collect them within two months.

A committee to include officials from the ministries of public works, housing, finance and energy and mineral resources will study the best means to ensure continued maintenance of government vehicles and machinery and conduct a feasibility study of a specialised unit to take charge of maintenance work. The committee will report on this in two months.

All departments will take extra care in studying the bids, announcing tenders and introducing changes to projects so that not to cause further financial burdens for the Treasury.

The Legislative Council at the Prime Ministry will speed up a study on establishing a central information system.

Government departments will be totally committed to financial regulations and will closely cooperate with the Audit Bureau, which will be submitting to the prime minister annual reports about its dealings with government departments.

The Audit Bureau will submit comprehensive study on developing its own regulations in a manner that ensures improvement in its performance. The Audit Bureau will continue to submit annual reports to the Lower House of Parliament about various violations of administrative committee and financial regulations.

ESCWA remains concerned about EC formation, obstacles to regional trade

By Lamey Salihy
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Despite fair trade assurances from European Community representatives, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) expressed concern Tuesday about the regional impact of a single European market.

Delegates at the U.N. organisation's 10th annual session also expressed scepticism over future intra-Arab trade accords free from tariffs, trade barriers, and above all, politics.

"Everything depends on politics not economics," an ESCWA senior economist said, pointing out recent Gulf labour policies that favour Asian labour over Arab nationals whose countries opposed the Gulf war.

An ESCWA report Tuesday urged member states to trade with the EC as a regional economic bloc to "safeguard their commercial and economic interests vis-a-vis that community."

The document recommended that member countries cooperate to reduce their reliance on oil, diversify economies to lessen regional competition, train workers in advanced technology, develop standards for industrial exchange and unify or exempt custom procedures for intraregional and worldwide trade.

ESCWA countries fear the EC will favour community member countries in trade, reducing imports from West Asia.

"A closer examination of the European Community's policy on foreign trade clearly shows it has been pursuing a policy... to limit the exporting capacity of the countries of Western Asia, even within the framework of trade on an equal basis," ESCWA Executive Secretary Tayseer Abdul Jarrah said in the report on the impact of a single European market.

The report condemned the community's agricultural subsidies covering 75 per cent of production costs as unfair trading

practices. Agriculture was one focus at the session as the region readies to compete with the EC, the world's biggest importer and second largest exporter of agricultural products.

The Lebanese representative expressed fears that with Portugal, Spain, Greece — and possibly Turkey — joining the community, Lebanon, which exports 20 per cent of its products to Europe, may lose the market.

Spain and Greece produce much of the fruits and vegetables grown in the Middle East because of similar climate.

"Our concern is not only Lebanon but for all members of the commission. We must face these difficulties," Lebanese ambassador Ahmed Ibrahim told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Ibrahim stressed regional agricultural cooperation to avoid quota disputes, such as the one between Jordan and Lebanon.

The document accused the EC of seeking to limit ESCWA regional petrochemical products to protect similar goods produced by the economic bloc.

Exports to EC countries are also threatened by industrial standards and specifications established by the community and by the possible end of preferential treatment of raw materials imported from the EC by ESCWA regional industries.

British Ambassador Patrick Eyera, speaking on behalf of the EC, denied the community was trying to squeeze out ESCWA products.

Mr. Eyera, whose country chairs the rotating presidency of the EC, said the community agreed in its Mediterranean policy at Rome in December 1990 to reduce tariffs to zero by January 1993 to improve access to its agricultural markets. He added that the community's assistance plan for 1992 to 1996 in the Mediterranean countries is about three times more than previous years.

"The community is seeking a

balanced and fair trading relationship with the countries of the ESCWA region. To do otherwise would be self-defeating. Trade can only grow in the long term if it brings real prosperity to both sides," he told a roomful of delegates minus Iraq, whose representative was missing in an apparent boycott of the speech.

Mr. Eyera added that harmonised industrial standards were not "an obstacle to trade" but "one of the most important instruments."

"They involve much initial work, and much adaptation, but there can be no doubt of the resulting long-term benefits," he said.

One ESCWA trade official, questioning "how long" the region must wait to witness the benefits, urged the EC to help countries through investment and joint ventures to revamp their industries.

According to the official, trade is already declining. She said that ESCWA exports to Europe have been dropping. In 1985, ESCWA exported \$20 billion worth of trade, or 26 per cent of total exports. In 1990 — the latest figures available Tuesday — exports valued \$21 billion but were only 18.5 per cent of ESCWA's total exports.

Intraregional trade is between seven and ten per cent. The German ambassador to Jordan also addressed the session, inviting regional companies to invest in Germany. He added that the ESCWA region has great economic potential.

"At present, this potential is still being channelled into the military sector. The negative effect of tension and armed conflicts on the state of the economy is also evident from the drop in almost five per cent in the gross national product of the region..." Ambassador Heinrich Reimers said.

Another area of concern is the livelihood of the community's three million Arab immigrants, of

whom about 1.25 million are workers.

Statistics show that EC employment rose by 1.4 per cent in 1990 and 9 per cent in 1991, causing a drop in the unemployment rate to 6.3 per cent. With unemployment in the former East Germany at 20 per cent and 40 per cent in Romania, ESCWA delegates said Arab workers will face new competitors.

"What will become of these (Arab workers) people. We see the need for a unified policy to be adopted to regulate (Arab) immigration in Europe," said the Arab Labour Organisation delegate.

Many delegates agreed that some form of regional grouping was necessary to compete and in the words of one of the Jordanian delegates: "to have the negotiating power to deal with the greater powers in the world."

But that could be difficult with the skewed distribution of wealth, for instance, 2.1 million Kuwaitis share nearly \$30 billion, while Egypt's 55 million inhabitants split less than \$35 billion, GNP per capita in Kuwait is about \$13,680, but in Egypt only \$650, according to figures from the economic publication World Paper.

"You can't eliminate the role of politics," said the ESCWA senior economist. He added ESCWA takes the integration of a regional market seriously because "it's the only way to survive."

Palestinian students return to schools amid Israeli provocations

By Odeh Odeh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A total of 572,262 students and 19,430 teachers Monday attended schools in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, amid tight Israeli measures and provocations.

Director of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) Education and Higher Education Department Jihad Karshouli said the "brutal Israeli measures are taken at a time when Israel announced that it was withdrawing its military personnel from residential areas."

In a statement to the Arabic Daily Al Rai and the Jordan Times, Mr. Karshouli said all schools, which were ordered closed by the military Israeli authorities are still closed and that students are not allowed to attend classes, despite the Israeli announcement about cancelling the closure order.

Mr. Karshouli called on the United Nations to investigate the difficult conditions Palestinians face in the occupied Arab territories, and to expose the Israeli measures against educational institutions.

Hundreds of teachers and students are still detained in the Israeli prisons, while others received summary dismissals and are not allowed to work again.

He pointed out that the Israeli authorities are "using different methods to forbid students from attending schools, moving them in great numbers from city centres to village centres."

Mr. Karshouli said students from Palestinian camps are not allowed to attend city schools for security reasons. He said that the "oppressive Israeli measures in the occupied territories" have resulted in a drop in the number of schools. The drop is caused by the closure of schools in the occupied West Bank and Gaza.

He said, schools have to work on a triple shift basis to cater for the great number of students who are now forced to study in schools that do not have electricity and sometimes far from their homes.

Mr. Karshouli said 50 students or more are jammed in each classroom in the West Bank and Gaza schools, compared with 27 students in the Jewish schools. He added that the Israeli authorities ban the entry and circulation of certain textbooks.

Aviation college lifts restrictions on admission

AMMAN (Petra) — The Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Tuesday opened the doors of The Queen Noor Civil Aviation Technical College (QNCATC) for school graduation who are not on CAA scholarships.

Until last year, the college accepted only students recruited and given scholarships by the CAA on the condition that they work at Jordanian airports as well as students from other Arab states.

This year the college decided to accept students with tawjih certificates in the scientific stream who do not have CAA scholarships. Applicants, however, should have scored no less than 60 per cent at the Tawjih exam, and their English language results should be no less than 60 per cent, according to CAA director General Ahmad Jweiber.

He said that students at the college normally take courses in

air traffic control, telecommunications, telecommunications engineering and air navigation among other subjects.

The college, which was established in 1971 with the approval of the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) "aims at turning out trained and qualified cadres to work with the CAA in Jordan and with other work at Jordanian airports as well," Arab states," said Mr. Jweiber.

The college, which first offered training to a very limited number of students, now accommodates 150 students, many of them have been employed at the Queen Alia International Airport, at Amman Airport and abroad in Arab countries, said Mr. Jweiber.

He said the college has adopted an ambitious plan designed to raise the standard of training in civil aviation and the programmes within the plan have been approved by ICAO.

WHAT'S GOING ON

- ★ Exhibition of paintings by Adnan Al Helu at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by Abdul Jabbar Ahmad at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition entitled, "Exploring Science" at Fatima Al Zahra Comprehensive School for Girls, Irbid.
- ★ Art exhibition by Kamal Al Jawhari at Irbid Municipality hall.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

King receives cables of good wishes

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday received a cable from President Abdo Diouf of Senegal, congratulating him on the successful surgery he underwent at Mayo Clinic this month. President Diouf wished King Hussein continued good health and happiness. The King also received a similar cable from the Mauritanian President Mouwiyah Weld Sidi Ahmad Taye, who wished the King speedy recovery.

Prince Hassan meets with new Islamic Justice

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, the Regent, received at the Royal Court Tuesday Sheikh North Salman who was appointed Chief Islamic Justice on Monday. Prince Hassan congratulated Sheikh Salman on his new post and stressed the need for preserving the independence of the Islamic judicial system. Sheikh Salman, who holds a doctorate degree in Islamic law, was the general mufti of the Jordanian armed forces. He succeeds Sheikh Mohammad Meheilan.

Princess Basma opens art exhibition

AMMAN (Petra) — Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Tuesday opened an art exhibition by Doudi Tabba, Nabila Hilmi and Nar Ikramullah. Ninety-seven items are displayed in the exhibition. Princess Basma toured the exhibition, and voiced her full admiration for the artistic plates on display. The inauguration ceremony was attended by a number of Arab and foreign diplomats.

Shahin appointed president of Philadelphia University

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Higher Council of Education Tuesday endorsed the recommendation of the Board of Trustees of Philadelphia University to appoint Abdul Rahman Abdul Qader Shahin as university president as of Sept. 1. Dr. Shahin obtained a doctorate degree in English literature from Houston University in 1972.

He joined the teaching staff of the University of Jordan and in 1985. He assumed many university posts, including head of the English Language Department and head of the Humanities and Social Sciences department at the Faculty of Higher Studies.

He also represented the Faculty of Arts at the University Board for three terms. Dr. Shahin was also vice president of Al Najah University in Nabhs in 1982.

Children's Drawing Contest First Prize JD 250

Jordanian artist Salam Kanaan announces an annual drawing contest for children in Jordan aged 8-13. This year's subject is an imaginary concept of the horse(s) without referring to reality or any picture. The drawing should be in a pencil (B) on an A4 paper without colours. Send drawings by mail to:

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75004 Paris - France

First prize: JD 250; five other artistic prizes from Paris. Send paintings before Nov. 11, 1992. Results appear April 2, 1993.

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The Image of Perfection

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

Jordan Times

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Choices that are not

IN THE COURSE of the next few days, Jordanian universities will announce the names of students accepted on the basis of the results of their Tawjihi exams. These universities will also declare the major studies of those who have been accepted again on the basis of their Tawjihi results. No one can quarrel with the first screening of applicants for higher education because this is legitimate and necessary. What causes concern, however, is the assignment of the major fields of university studies to the accepted students solely on the basis of their grades without due reference to their aptitudes and interests. One president of a prominent Jordanian university estimates that up to 95 per cent of Jordanian university students end up not being able to choose their careers according to their real interests and aptitudes. This is indeed an academic and professional catastrophe with dire consequences for the country and its student population. The first obvious casualty of this erroneous system is the extent of excellence in university education because it is a well-known fact that without having real interest in the major subject assigned to a student he or she may never reach the degree of excellence that one would expect from the best of its students. This is further reflected in professional life when the country will have many professionals of all walks of life who understandably lack the inner motivation and drive to attain the optimum in their non-chosen professions and careers.

This has been the educational policy of the country for as far as one can remember and it is high time that it is overhauled and reconsidered in the light of the experiences of other nations which have acquired a deeper appreciation of university education and learnt the hard way that motivation, aptitudes and interests are also criteria for selecting one's higher educational pursuits and in turn their post-university professions or trades. Otherwise, mediocrity will continue to characterise higher education in the Kingdom and in due course also the practice of professions and careers.

The greatest seats of learning across the world accord aptitudes a certain minimum measure of importance in admitting students even to subjects as medicine and law. Other fields of study are usually left up to the choice of students as long as they meet the minimum requirements for admission. The new motto of university education in Jordan must give our accepted students a greater say in the selection of their major fields of education. Instead of 95 per cent of choice of professions in Jordan remaining in the hands of third parties, be they governmental or private, at least 75 per cent of professional choice must be assigned to students themselves alone.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE IMPOSITION of the no-fly zone over part of Iraq, is a clear and open admission that the 1991 aggression on the Iraqi people was a total failure, said Al Ra'i Arabic daily Tuesday. The paper said that the armada Mr. Bush had prepared for the Gulf war achieved its purpose, that he would not be in a critical position when facing opponents at home and abroad, said the daily. It said that had Mr. Bush come out really victorious from the aggression on Iraq, and had his campaign achieved success, he would have not needed to deal with the defiance of Saddam Hussein and his appointment in the presidential campaign Bill Clinton. It is no heroic feat to deprive children of their milk and medicine and it is no use lying to the American public about the facts in the Gulf war, said the paper. It said that Mr. Bush had failed to convince the American people of his earlier lies and he is turning his attention to further acts of aggression on Iraq, hoping that he would, after all, persuade the electorate at home of his ability to crush his enemies on both fronts. Aggression on Iraq did not achieve any victory for the American president and his allies who massed their planes and their troops and war machines to crush the people of a Third World country in January 1991, added the daily. For his new act of aggression on Iraq, Mr. Bush is claiming that he was rallying to support the Shiites of southern Iraq, but the Shiites have declared their allegiance to the Iraqi leadership and condemned the American threats of aggression, the paper said. The paper said that the whole world has now come to realise that Mr. Bush's earlier claims of victory were a big lie.

A COLUMNIST in Al Ra'i daily called on the government-controlled universities in Jordan to open the door to the largest number of school graduates to enable them to acquire university education. Fakhri Kassar said that despite the repeated calls by the media for more opportunities to be given to the students to get higher education, nothing positive has materialised. Indeed, this year the government universities announced they will accept 9,835 students, nearly 2,000 less than the last academic year, the writer noted. The government universities have been resorting to excuse claiming that by accepting fixed numbers they are safeguarding the good quality of education or claiming that they lack the facilities and the qualified teachers for more numbers, he said. The writer said that education is a right for all and in neighbouring Arab countries universities accept the largest number of high-school student graduates, offering them the chance to learn at far less costs than in Jordan where the universities charge exorbitant fees. Universities of neighbouring Arab countries turn out a great number of highly education graduates, despite the great number they accept each year, and therefore there is no justification for Jordanian universities not to follow suit, the writer pointed out. Since the average to succeed for a Tawjihi student is 50 per cent, why should universities fix their acceptance of students by demanding a 65 per cent average, the writer asked.

Economic Forum

A boom in the West Bank

AFTER having spent a month in the West Bank, the main economic finding I wish to report is that there is some sort of an economic expansion going on there; you may even call it a boom.

When I made this remark in the presence of some businessmen there, they commented that if there was one, it started only one or two months ago. However, the existence, not the age, of the economic upturn is the issue.

The symptoms of the economic expansion are unmistakable even though they may not be statistically provable. One of them is especially significant. It is the price level. Prices are high, actually very high compared to those prevailing in the East Bank. High prices usually deter demand except during an expansion. A very active buying spree could be noticed in all walks of economic activity in the West Bank. The spending spree is quite noticeable in the field of consumption but capital expenditure could also be safely assumed to be on the rise, building on the talk about expanding present businesses and starting or planning new enterprises, which could be heard commonly in the town. Now, what are the factors that have contributed to this unexpected economic shift?

I estimated that not less than \$200 million were injected in the

market of the West Bank this summer. A great number of visitors, entirely unprecedented during the last five years, poured into the occupied territories not only across the "open" bridges but also via Lidda airport. The instant spending of these visitors contributed to change in the economic landscape. Let us remember that, in demographic terms, the West Bank is no more than a city or even a suburb of a city. A spending of \$100-\$200 million is capable of changing things.

Eleven months ago (Sept. 25, 1991), we predicted in this column that the Jordanian economy would be witnessing a long slow economic recovery similar to what is going on nowadays. The core reason for that prediction was the construction boom which could pull the economy forward, so much on the lines portrayed in Nurkse's model of unbalanced economic growth. Now, some of the economic heat of the East Bank's recovery undoubtedly has been spilling over into the occupied territories.

Practically, part of the resources from Kuwait and Gulf states ended up in the occupied territories. Similar to what happened in the East Bank, their arrival ignited also a small construction and property boom in the West Bank, as evidenced by the substantial rise in housing rents and the prices of building land. Probably, a

very slight recent relaxation in the policy of issuing building permits there is contributing to the construction boom underway.

All these factors have been aided by an improvement in the economic outlook brought about by the onset of peace negotiations and the concomitant political prospects. One can say that the Intifada is "pausing" now, not in anticipation of concrete "positive" developments as much as in wait for an either-way clearout in the political horizon. This has provided a breathing space for businessmen and economic community, which was, for the first time since 1988, conducive to conducting normal economic activity. It is true that the whole new atmosphere is tactical and thereby tentative in nature, but it is working in economic terms.

However, the devastating impediment to economic activity in the occupied territories remains the phenomenally prohibitive high taxes which are really the staying nightmare of the business community. No factor is effective in stimulating the economy of the occupied territories more than, or as much as, a rational tax system, that is much lower tax rates. The continuation of the present tax policy will oil in the bud any economic recovery there.

'American voter concerned about Mideast peace'

By Rosalind Mandline

WASHINGTON — The Middle East peace process is a critical concern for many American voters, according to James Zogby, executive director of the Arab American Institute.

While domestic issues, such as the economy, are of primary importance to most voters, widespread public support for the peace process has evolved into greater attention to the Middle East and its concerns, Mr. Zogby noted in a Worldnet television "dialogue" programme Aug. 26 with Algiers, Amman, Cairo and Damascus.

"The Middle East is a critical question" for Americans, Mr. Zogby said. Polling data indicates that Americans "are very supportive of the Middle East peace process," he pointed out. Because Americans "want this process to work," candidates are paying more attention to presenting an "even-handed" approach to Middle East issues, he said.

The Arab American community has played a central role in building this support and increasing awareness, Mr. Zogby said. "We will not give up in trying to make the Middle East a critical issue," he said.

Arab-American organisations have met with the Bush administration regularly regarding the peace process and have played a part in shaping the policies on the Middle East for both the Republican and Democratic parties, he said.

The Arab world can and should play a part in fostering support for the peace process and increasing awareness in the United States, Mr. Zogby stressed to his questioners.

November, Mr. Zogby said. If Mr. Clinton were to win the election "you will not see a Middle East policy that will be very different from current policy."

While some aspects of the Democratic Party platform are a matter of some concern among Arab American voters, Mr. Zogby said Clinton is "aware of the critical role" the Arab World plays in the peace process. "Regardless of the rhetoric of the campaign," Mr. Zogby said the Democrats "are not going to pursue a one-sided policy."

Mr. Zogby noted that Governor Clinton has not yet met with Arab American leaders and the Democratic Party does not have a formal structure for its Arab American constituents.

The Republican Party created an Arab American Committee in 1984, he said. Arab Americans, such as George Salem, former solicitor general, in the Labour Department for the Reagan administration; and Mitch Daniels, an advisor to the Bush-Quayle committee, are "very influential in the Republican Party," Mr. Zogby said.

Arab Americans "do not have

the same recognition on the Democratic side," he said. "What we want is for Bill Clinton to meet with Arab American leaders on a national level."

While Arab Americans "have not succeeded in having a formal meeting with Clinton, this does not mean we don't have a presence in the Democratic Party," Mr. Zogby underscored.

Mr. Zogby stressed, however, that the Arab American community is certainly "respected by the Democratic leadership."

Arab Americans sponsored a major event at the Democratic convention in New York City last month, at which presidential candidate Governor Jerry Brown, and civil rights leader Jesse Jackson spoke, Mr. Zogby noted.

In addition, Mr. Zogby pointed out that the three Arab Americans in the U.S. Congress — Representatives Mary Rose Oakar and Nick Joe Rahall and Senator George Mitchell, the majority leader — are all Democrats.

Arab Americans have been "active in pushing our case" within the Democratic Party and have contributed to an "active debate" on these issues within the party, Mr. Zogby said.

Commenting on the factors contributing to the political strength of the Jewish American community, Mr. Zogby said the Jewish community has been in the United States for a longer period of time and is twice as large as the Arab American community. In addition, the tragedy of the Holocaust "galvanised that community, and gave it a sense of commitment to survival," he said.



In the corner Bush is raring for a fight

By Richard Ben Cramer

HOUSTON — George Bush has got 'em right where he wants 'em. His plane is on fire, he's miles from the target, he's hurtling down with a tone of bombs strapped underneath ... and there's no one in the air or on the ground who thinks he can get out of this one. Perfect! This is Mr. Bush at his most dangerous, as Saddam Hussein and Bill Clinton may find out, at their peril.

At the Republican convention in Houston, all the talk from those-in-the-know is about desperate political measures. Can James Baker, on his way back to the bridge, make the White House and campaign chum the water together? Can Ronald Reagan keep the ships on the right flank from deserting the battle? Can the United Nations' inspectors or the U.S. Air Force push Saddam to a blunder that could give the president — this week just in time! — a 20-point bump out of his convention, as Mr. Clinton got a month ago?

People say Mr. Bush needs the speech of his life to cut through the hopeless confusion of his administration, to make up for his own added lack of vision, to "define himself" anew. He needs a rabbit from a hat, a miracle — at least a genius speech writer. Baloney. They miss the point. There's only one fight the Republican Party and the Bushies have to win this week and that's the fight within the president's breast.

Four years ago, the pundits and pollsters were all ready to write George Bush off. After all, the man was a wimp! He was 17 points down to Michael Dukakis. He had no positions of his own, no plan. The Bush campaign was about nothing. In Boston, Mr. Dukakis's brainy young savants were choosing up offices in the West Wing of the White House. Then they froze as George Bush began to take their hero apart. In three weeks, the governor's lead was gone, but more important, so was the wimp. We know what happened — he won 40 states.

But what did it take? Mr. Bush never did define himself or present a plan for America. But he took one look at Mr. Dukakis and defined him as he appeared through the Bush-eyes.

Who was this little guy? Mr. Dukakis didn't know how the world really worked. He was just another Jimmy Carter, a technocratic thinker, who could not be trusted with America's fate in a hostile world than could any other liberal Harvard woolly-head — a do-good little governor from a little state who was going to give away the store!

Where'd he ever been? What gave him the right to tear everything down, to pick on those good Republicans who had laboured so hard to build up this country? The guy was a little bully.

So then, Mr. Bush, so immaculately polite, could come at Michael (and Kitty) Dukakis with a broken bottle in each fist. He

could run against criminal-coddling and for the Pledge of Allegiance. He could do whatever it took because it wasn't about nothing anymore. He had one conviction, honestly held: Mr. Dukakis should not be president.

When Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait, there was no one who would predict that the United States would go to war. It was too dangerous. It was politically impossible. The United States did not have the allies in the United Nations, the assets in the region or the will in Congress.

But you had to see Saddam Hussein through the Bush-eyes. Here was a thorn, never been anywhere, had no sense of how to behave. Jeze. Mr. Bush and Mr. Baker had been bending over backwards trying to bring him into the circle, make him a friend! And what does he do? He spurns Mr. Bush, beats up on a neighbour.

(Those pictures on TV!) He showed no respect for women, children — the guy was just a bully.

So Mr. Bush shredded every option but a war against Iraq. He said that Saddam Hussein was no different from Hitler — and he meant it. He marched in to a morning meeting at the White House and announced to his startled staff: "I don't care if I get one vote in Congress. We're going in."

Now, you can see the old bomber pilot strapping on his flight map and revving himself up. He's

To the Shiites the U.S. was the Great Satan — but that was before Saddam Hussein. David Hirst of the Guardian newspaper writes on the enemies who are now uneasy comrades

IT IS a strange alliance, that between the United States and Ayatollah Bakr Hakim and other such Tehran-based fundamentalist Iraqi Shiite leaders.

For until August 1990, and the American-led campaign to drive President Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait, such leaders paid lip service to the rhetoric of Khomeini and his Islamic Revolution. For them, too, the U.S. was the Great Satan. And, conversely, the U.S. would not touch their likes with a bargepole. Throughout the Iran-Iraq war the U.S. had backed Saddam Hussein as an instrument to contain Khomeinism and the dire threat it seemed to pose to the oil-rich monarchies of the Gulf. In the immediate aftermath of Desert Storm, it was the Khomeinist peril, as the U.S. perceived it, which more than anything led to the eventual failure of the great popular uprising, the Shiite one in the south and the Kurdish one in the north, which had come so close to toppling the Iraqi despot.

It was actually in the south that those twin rebellions started, and they did so partly because the Shiites believed they had Western backing. But suddenly there came the "great betrayal." President Bush made it clear he would not use ground troops in support of the rebels; nor would he even use his aircraft to shoot down Iraqi fighters or helicopters on sorties against them. He made his volte face largely in deference to regional allies which feared Iraq would exploit the Shiite rebellion to export its revolution to south Iraq and that this would pose an even greater threat to the whole region than a now-chastened Saddam Hussein himself.

It is an all-the-stronger alliance in that some of those staunchly pro-Western Arab states, like Egypt, which participated in the Gulf war coalition, have the deepest misgivings about this new Western venture. They fear the newly-imposed "no fly zone" will lead to Iraq's partition into three segments — the Kurdish north, the Sunni centre and the Shiite south — and that this would be a most dangerous precedent for the Middle East as a whole.

It is of course very far from being a formal alliance. Apparently the U.S. still wants nothing to do with the Iranian-backed Shiites. In its recent dealings with other Iraqi opposition groups, it reportedly ruled out any association with such organisations as Al Dawa, which, as part of the Shiite "terrorist international", has been implicated in the blowing up of Western embassies from Kuwait to Beirut. But whatever the U.S. may say there is now an unmistakable convergence of aims and the Shiites, who have always resented what they see as Western favouritism of the Kurds, cannot but welcome the "no-fly zone," however grudgingly. In fact Ayatollah Hakim himself has already done so, if only, out of deference to Tehran, in allusive fashion.

Yet the very incongruity of this convergence merely highlights what this new Western venture surely is: the latest in a long line of funderings, policy reversals, acts of political and, in this case, blatant electoral opportunism. At least it is hardly surprising that the Arab World sees it that way; hardly surprising, either, if the chief beneficiaries of this improvisation, the Iraqi Shiites themselves, wonder whether they will not, once again, become its chief victims.

If the aim really is to bring

Saddam Hussein down — though even that is not entirely sure given the vacillations of the past — will it work? Even among the Iraqi opposition, there seem to be two contrary schools of thought.

One, the optimistic one, argues that the "no fly zone" will add yet another burden to Saddam Hussein's already over-burdened regime, and that, at some point, he and his whole system is bound to crack under these relentlessly increasing strains.

It is axiomatic among the Kurds of the north that even the loyalist Republican Guards have very little stomach for counter-insurgency. That is one reason why, last year, Saddam Hussein sent his army back behind a heavily defended fixed line; it made it easier to control his own men. He cannot do the same in the south. To acquiesce in the formation of a de facto "liberated" zone there, like the Kurdish one in the north, would be an act of pure desperation.

For the south is geographically and strategically more important and its population much more intermingled; and the emergence, now, of a second such zone would be terribly demoralising.

So even if — as Baghdad has more or less clearly intimated — the airforce does not challenge the Western over-flights, just as it has not been doing so in the Kurdish north, Saddam Hussein will presumably do all in his power to retain control on the ground. And for an already demoralised army, the psychological impact could be disproportionately important.

Furthermore, the optimists go on, there is good ground for believing that the mood of the southerners would communicate itself to the centre, where at least half the Shiite population live. "We are relying on the people," said an exile. "When they feel safe from Saddam Hussein's army and airforce" in the south "the climate can be prepared for a change in Baghdad." With the "barrier of fear" broken down, people could come out into the streets which this time could trigger a military rebellion too.

In the opposite camp, the pessimist school argues — at worst — that, far from weakening, let alone toppling, Saddam Hussein, the "no fly zone," (perhaps leading to a "safe haven") could actually consolidate him, albeit, perhaps, in a much reduced form.

Just as a "liberated" Kurdistan would probably never have come into being had not Saddam Hussein survived those calamities which his own policies brought upon his country and people, so this latest Western venture would not have come to pass either.

And just as the Kurdish "safe haven" is surreptitiously crystallising into something more, gradually acquiring, both institutionally and psychologically, the attributes to statehood, who knows where this new venture will end — should Saddam Hussein, yet again, survive the new burden on his regime?

In response to Arab fears, the U.S. and Britain insist that partition is the last thing on their minds. But it is one thing for outside powers which have been so inept at foreseeing the consequences of their earlier action to say that, a very different thing to persuade others to believe it.

Saddam Hussein will now at least have the opportunity to present himself as the defender of Iraq's territorial integrity. But if that does not work, and he is forced to withdraw from much of the south like he has done from the north, he can still — the pessimists argue — continue to hold power in the centre. For he would be ready to see the whole country dismembered and destroyed if that is the price of his own survival.

Hopes fade for quick accord

(Continued from page 1)

it doesn't have to be on either one's terms of reference or grounds. We can find common grounds, I think."

Israel's top negotiator agreed. "Unfortunately we are a little bit frustrated," said Elyakim Rubinstein. But, he added, "we are sure that ways can be found to deal with this."

Both sides now appear ready to accept that negotiations can best be conducted in small groups of experts — with each claiming the idea as its own.

But Palestinian negotiators want to focus attention on Israel's human rights abuses against Palestinians in the occupied territories. Israel, on the other hand, wants discussions to focus on arrangements for a Palestinian self-governing authority.

Human rights, argued spokesman Yossi Gal, is a "symptom" of the Palestinians' plight and would be addressed if the Palestinians gain control over their daily lives.

Although Israel is not willing to give the Palestinians all they want, he added, its proposals are "a significant change" from what they have now under Israel's military rule.

"We feel that the time for generalities should be brought to a close and that we should get down to the nitty gritty of negotiations," he told reporters.

But the Palestinians are trying to broaden the negotiations now to include more than just interim self-government.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will not insist that Palestinians hold elections for a self-governing council in the occupied

territories, news reports said.

Mr. Rabin made the remarks to Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo during a meeting Monday, two Israeli dailies said.

Such a move would mean that the negotiators that Israel has been dealing with would probably form the core of leadership among the Palestinians, without being challenged in elections.

"Israel does not intend to force the Palestinians to hold elections, and if the efforts to hold elections run into difficulties, Israel will propose discussing an autonomy council manned without elections," Mr. Rabin was quoted by the daily Davar as saying.

Mr. Rabin's spokesman, Gad Ben Ari, said the premier had been speaking hypothetically "to make the point that Israel is determined to do everything possible to advance with the formation of self-government."

Mr. Ben Ari said that what Mr. Rabin actually said was that "if the Palestinians would have a big problem in the end with elections, Israel would tend to opt to continue with the autonomy (talks)."

The socialist daily Al Hamishmar said Mr. Rabin explained to Colombo that Israel felt Palestinians were somewhat concerned about the idea of elections after threats were made to those considering running for the council.

Israel said it freed 138 more Palestinian prisoners Tuesday as a goodwill gesture coinciding with the peace talks in Washington.

The army said 195 prisoners were released Monday of a total 600 to be let out this week.

The government said last week it would carry out several "goodwill" gestures to coincide with the sixth round of peace talks.

NAM opens summit conference

(Continued from page 1)

But Mr. Suharto also warned donors against attempts to link aid with human rights.

Despite attempts to give the summit an economic focus, pre-summit meetings of foreign ministers have focused almost entirely on political issues.

Contentious issues such as Yugoslavia and U.S. actions in Iraq refused to stay sidelined.

Malaysia and Iran, resisting earlier moves to shelve the Yugoslav issue at the summit, lashed out at Serbian attacks on Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Iranian President Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani expressed reservations on the move to postpone a decision on Yugoslavia's membership of the movement until the United Nations meets later this month.

Lebanese rightists boost challenge

(Continued from page 1)

But the sources were doubtful that the present parliament would be able to challenge Syria's backing of the polls.

The Christians, who lost their privileges in a 1989 peace pact and shared power equally with the Muslims, say elections should take place after some 40,000 Syrian troops, now deployed across two-thirds of Lebanon, move to the eastern Bekaa Valley.

They also say it is essential that hundreds of thousands of displaced Christians return to their villages in Muslim-held areas.

Sunday's results showed that

Sunni Muslim Prime Minister Rashid Al Solh narrowly escaped defeat by a margin of a few hundred votes. Christian Justice Minister Nasri Al Maalouf and Sunni Education Minister Zaki Mazboudi lost.

The highest number of votes went to former Prime Minister Salim Al Hoss in Beirut and Druze State Minister Walid Junblat in the Chouf mountains.

Political sources said the polls reflected public discontent with Mr. Solh's government which has failed to prop up the collapsing currency or restore faith in the deteriorating economy.

Israel says progress made with Syria

(Continued from page 1)

official said on Monday that growing inter-communal tensions in Lebanon could have an impact on the peace talks in Washington.

"If there is an effort to beat things up, it will be harder to insulate these talks from those events," said the official, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity.

The election upheaval has already affected Lebanese-Israeli peace talks, which last week

made no progress while Israel's talks with its other Arab partners moved ahead.

The U.S. official said Lebanon needed to start addressing Israel's "security" interests more seriously.

"They are so focused internally they are not coming in with very much," he said.

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Libya crisis

(Continued from page 1)

monarchy and brought him to power.

Col. Qadhafi urged his people to ignore the United Nations and negotiate directly with the West, particularly the United States.

Col. Qadhafi said the U.N. was

transformed into a "kitchen for the West."

Referring to the recent visit of U.N. envoy Vladimir Petrovsky's recent visit to Libya, Col. Qadhafi said the U.N. should work as "a broker between nations and not only serve as a courier."

Col. Qadhafi praised the administration of U.S. President George Bush, pointing out that

the United States have many friends in the Arab countries.

Libya should make use of this friendship, Col. Qadhafi said, apparently referring to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak who has been making diplomatic efforts to prevent the crisis from escalating.

Col. Qadhafi also expressed support for Mr. Bush's Republi-

can party claiming the U.S. Democratic Party is a "big supporter of the Jews."

The Libyan leader praised some Arab leaders for their efforts to defuse Libya's crisis with the West but said that "Arab countries in fact are not independent and can not do anything because they are under American pressure."



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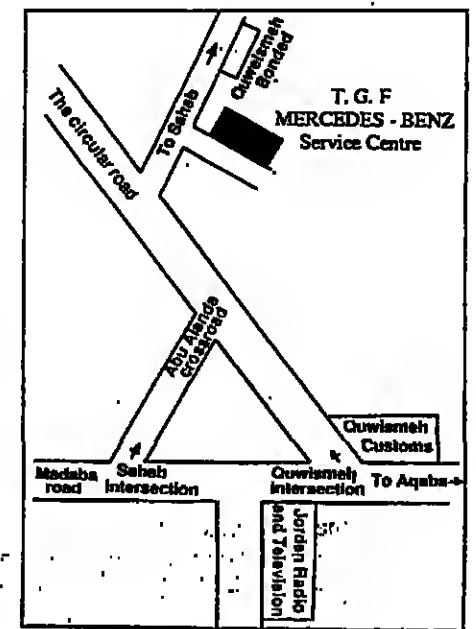
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Shbeilat

(Continued from page 1)

silence him." She referred to his strong role in bringing "corruption" cases against former officials in the Lower House, where he heads the investigative committee.

Mrs. Shbeilat questioned why his detention came soon after her husband took a prominent role in bringing a corruption case to the Lower House involving former government officials, including former Prime Minister Zaid Rifai. "They knew he was working on four or five other similar cases," she said.

Mr. Bakr, however, said he doubted that political motives were behind his client's detention.

He added that Mr. Shbeilat, who is being held at Swaga prison, had not yet made a statement to the prosecution and had not yet had a private discussion with him on the case. Mr. Bakr said he visited the deputy at the prison Tuesday morning and requested that the deputy "does not make a statement unless I am present."

The order for Mr. Shbeilat's detention would have him held in custody for 15 days for questioning as part of an investigation regarding the "Nafar" organization, according to security sources. During that time, he is not permitted to contact anyone except his lawyer.

The Muslim Brotherhood, with which Mr. Shbeilat was at odds sometimes over political issues, was cautious in its reaction to Mr. Shbeilat's detention, but called for his release on bail. The bloc's spokesman in Parliament, Ibrahim Khreisat, told the Jordan Times that the Brotherhood objected to "the method used to question him."

"He can be interrogated without being detained," Mr. Khreisat said. "As a representative of the people, he must be treated with more respect, and the investigation should be done by the civil courts, not by the State Security Court." He added that the measure for Mr. Shbeilat's detention contradicted "accepted mannerism in an era of freedom and democracy."

The Brotherhood spokesman, however, was cautious when he voiced his organization's position "against endorsing any party trying to destabilize the security of the Kingdom." He refused to comment on whether he suspected political motives behind Mr. Shbeilat's detention, and said he preferred to wait and see what the investigations reveal.

Meanwhile, plans to rally support for the release of Mr. Shbeilat were called off Tuesday after his associates were told (by unnamed sources) that there was reason to be optimistic about his possible release soon. There was talk early Tuesday about organizing a protest at the Parliament building on Thursday.

Mrs. Shbeilat, on the other hand, challenged her husband's supporters to stand by him. Mr. Shbeilat won a seat in Parliament in November 1989 after receiving the highest number of votes in the Third District. He had been a member of Parliament since 1984 when he won a seat in by-elections for the same district.

Iraqi rebels want to fill 'vacuum'

(Continued from page 1)

allegiance to President Saddam. Nuclear weapons experts went to work under tightened security in Baghdad Tuesday on the first U.N. inspection mission since the "no-fly" zone was set up.

A U.N. official said there had been "no problems" during a full day of work.

The mission, he said, has been accompanied by high security and more-than-usual secrecy.

The U.N. official said "a lot" of Iraqi security personnel accompanied the team on Tuesday, but gave no specifics.

The United Nations placed its workers on maximum alert after a bomb was found attached to the car of three U.N. guards in northern Iraq on Friday.

The 21-member team — which includes Americans as well as French, Germans, Italians and Poles — set out from their Baghdad hotel early Tuesday without disclosing their target site. They returned at sunset.

France sent four Mirage 2000 warplanes Tuesday to Saudi Ara-

bia to join Britain and the United States in imposing the "no-fly" zone.

Russia will send two warships to the Gulf, Russian navy officials announced Tuesday.

The large anti-submarine ship Admiral Vinogradov and the tanker Boris Butoma are likely to set sail "in the first ten days of September," said the navy spokesman, Valery Novikov.

Both vessels belong to the Russian Pacific fleet, based in the Far East, and were chosen for the mission, because the fleet had "extensive experience" of operations in the Gulf region over the past years, Mr. Novikov said.

The ITAR-TASS news agency said the voyage from the ships' base to the Gulf might take two weeks.

The agency cited Colonel General Viktor Dubynin, chief of staff of Russia's armed forces, as saying that the ships will take part in the mission of the international peacekeepers force, carried out in accordance with U.N. Security Council resolutions on Iraq.

France sent four Mirage 2000 warplanes Tuesday to Saudi Ara-

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Courier struggles into 2nd round at U.S. Open

NEW YORK (R) — World number one Jim Courier cleared the first hurdle in his attempt to return to the Grand Slam winners' circle Monday, but not without a scare at the U.S. Open tennis championships.

The top-seeded Australian and French Open champion needed all of three hours and 20 minutes and a fourth-set tiebreak to turn back promising newcomer Alex O'Brien in the last match of the tournament's opening day.

Courier, who has been mired in a slump since taking his second consecutive French Open crown, finally prevailed 4-6 6-1 6-3 7-6.

"It's been a tough summer," Courier said. "Hopefully I've played myself back into shape and I'm ready to go."

Earlier, fifth-seeded Wimbledon runner-up Goran Ivanisevic passed his first test with flying colours as did 11th-seeded former Wimbledon champion Michael Stich.

Courier, the Open runner-up last year, looked like anything but the number one player in the world as he struggled in every game of the first set against O'Brien, the U.S.-collegiate champion in singles and doubles.

With nothing to lose in his first U.S. Open match and the crowd rooting for a major upset, the 18th-ranked O'Brien played daring tennis from the outset as he broke the top seed in the first and seventh games for a 5-2 lead and held on to take the first set.

The two reverted to form in the second set. But in the third and fourth sets Courier found himself hanging on for dear life.

Courier immediately found himself down a break in the fourth set and was unable to put

the set back on serve until the eighth game.

As O'Brien held serve at 5-6 to send the set to the climatic tiebreak, the crowd roared its approval.

The top seed's superior experience told the tale in the tiebreak as he jumped out to a 5-1 lead. But O'Brien battled fiercely, saving three successive match points before Courier ended it with his 16th ace of the match.

"I played him a lot in juniors and I knew it was going to be a tough match, and it was," said Courier, after managing to avoid becoming only the third top seed in the open era to go out of the U.S. Open in the first round.

In the tiebreak I was able to pull out a couple of clutch aces." Dealt the toughest first-round opponent of any seeded player, Ivanisevic avenged his Barcelona semifinal loss to Olympic champion Marc Rosset of Switzerland 6-4 6-4 6-4 in swirling winds at Louis Armstrong Stadium.

But the fifth seed, while declaring himself a legitimate title contender, said his game was not yet at the level that carried him to the final at Wimbledon.

"I'm still not playing like I know I have to play," admitted Ivanisevic, adding, "This match is going to give me a lot of confidence because I beat a great player."

Stich, who has had a disappointing year in which he has not been past the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam, safely reached the second round in the tournament's opening stadium court match.

The 11-seeded German, winner of just one tournament in 1992, posted a 6-4 6-3 6-4 win

over Frenchman Olivier Delaite.

Women's defending champion and top seed Monica Seles quietly zoomed into the second round a 6-1 6-0 rout of American Audra Keller.

Seles, who like Courier is trying to add the U.S. Open crown to the Australian and French titles she won earlier this year, needed just 45 minutes to dispatch Keller with a minimum of her infamous grunting.

Second seed Steffi Graf, who dashed Seles' chances of sweeping the four Grand Slam titles by beating the Yugoslav in the Wimbledon final, also had a swift trip into the second round.

Graf completed her first-round chores in just 42 minutes, though she dropped one more game than Seles.

The Wimbledon champion crushed American Halle Cioffi 6-0 6-2, taking the first 11 games in a row.

"I was totally outplayed. It was so pitiful, it was scary," said Cioffi. "I was on the defensive every single point."

Graf, Open champion in 1988 and 1989, won 16 points as she raced through the first set in 18 minutes.

"To tell you the truth I'm just disappointed that you don't get tougher competition," said Graf. Seventh seed Mary Joe Fernandez would have been happy with the kind of competition Graf faced. The American had to rally to beat compatriot Donna Faber 3-6 6-0 6-4.

The only other seed to see opening day action was 13th-seeded Frenchman Guy Forget, who beat American Jim Grabb 6-2 6-3 7-6.

Napoli: Maradona is not for sale

NAPLES (AP) — Amid rumours that it may soon transfer Diego Maradona, the Italian team Napoli Tuesday reaffirmed that its Argentine star-forward is not for sale and that he must honour his current contract.

Spain's Seville and Brazil's Palmeiras have been bidding for Maradona. But Napoli insists that the Argentine forward must rejoin the Italian team for the next first division campaign.

Maradona, who in June completed a 15-month international suspension for cocaine use, does not want to return to Italy and has urged Napoli to release him so that he can join another club. His contract expires in June 1993.

While denying intent to transfer Maradona, Napoli accepted a request by Seville officials to discuss the player's future.

"We plan to meet Spanish officials in Naples soon as they have some proposals to make. But Napoli's stand about Maradona is unchanged. He's not for sale," said Giovanni Amati, a club spokesman.

Seville, coached by Maradona's long-time friend Carlos Bilardo, has asked Napoli to discuss Maradona's transfer.

According to published reports, Seville would offer up to \$8 million to get Maradona while Palmeiras, the latest entry in the Maradona affair, reportedly made a bid of \$5 million.

"We have not received any bid from the Brazilian side so far," Amati said. "However things are changing quickly in these days and what's true today could be different tomorrow."

The enigmatic remark of the club spokesman may indicate that Napoli could at last consider Maradona's release, rather than idling him for another year. The player said in recent interviews in Buenos Aires that he would quit soccer for good if Napoli does not transfer him immediately.

Jose Carlos Bruno, the head of the Brazilian branch of the Italian Daily group Parmalat, was quoted by the Italian News Agency (ANSA) as saying that his company was supporting Palmeiras in negotiations.

Parmalat, based in Parma, northern Italy, is the Brazilian team's commercial sponsor and has recently extended its sponsorship to Boca Juniors in Argentina and Penarol in Uruguay.

Parmalat officials in Italy said they were not involved in negotiations for Maradona, but were aware that Palmeiras had bid for the player.

Bobby Fischer spits on U.N. sanctions letter

SVETI STEFAN, Yugoslavia (AP) — On the eve of his comeback match from a 20-year withdrawal from the chess world, Bobby Fischer Tuesday spat on a U.S. government letter warning him that playing in Yugoslavia would violate U.N. sanctions.

An acerbic, angry Fischer, holding his first news conference since the 1970s, also declared that he remains world champion and characterized the current official titleholder, Garry Kasparov of Russia, as among the "lowest dogs."

Fischer appeared at the news conference with Boris Spassky, whom he defeated in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1972 to take the world crown.

But Spassky, who agreed to the rematch and a share in the \$5 million purse, barely had time to answer questions at the news conference dominated by Fischer.

The most dramatic moment of the meeting with reporters at this luxurious Adriatic resort came as Fischer answered a question about U.S. warnings to him not to play the rematch in Yugoslavia.

"One second here," said Fischer, rummaging through a briefcase and pulling out a lengthy letter.

"This is the order to provide information and cease and desist activities from the Department of Treasury, Washington, D.C., Aug. 21, 1992," he said as he handed the document.

"So, this is my reply to the order not to defend my title here," he said, holding it in front of his mouth and spitting loudly onto the paper.

Some Yugoslav journalists and match organizers applauded. Fischer has been warned by the U.S. government that he faces possible fines of \$250,000 and 10

years in prison if he proceeds with the match.

Answering only pre-submitted questions, Fischer charged that Kasparov and Anatoly Karpov had fixed their championship match in 1984. He said professional chess had been dominated by cheating since he was stripped of his title in 1975 by the International Chess Federation.

In a sardonic tone as he leafed through written questions, Fischer also criticized Communists, Jews, Israel and the United Nations and said he felt ill-treated by the U.S. government.

Asked by the Associated Press if he supports U.N. sanctions designed to stop the war 80 kilometres away in neighbouring Bosnia-Herzegovina, Fischer replied: "No. I don't support the sanctions because first of all I don't support the U.N."

"For example, look at Israel. There has been resolution after resolution against them for them to leave the West Bank and so on," Fischer said. "They ignore resolutions and never have sanctions against them."

He also criticized the recent rescinding of the U.N. General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism.

Asked about press reports characterizing him as anti-Semitic, Fischer replied that Semites include both Arabs and Jews.

"I am definitely not anti-Arab. OK?"

He also said Soviet Communism is "basically a mask for Bolshevism, which is a mask for Judaism."

As about whether his chess play has improved during the last 20 years since he played publicly, Fischer said only: "Well, we'll see."

United Czechoslovakia kick off last World Cup campaign

PRAGUE (R) — Czechoslovakia kick off their last World Cup campaign as a united nation Wednesday when they meet Belgium in a group four qualifier in Prague.

With a scheduled split of the 74-year-old Czechoslovak Republic into two independent states from January, plans are also underway to divide the soccer federation into two.

But both sides have agreed to maintain a unified Czechoslovak team at least up to the World Cup finals in the United States in two years' time.

"We have one single task Wednesday, to win," said coach Milan Macala. "All the players know that."

In contrast to previous years when, under Communist rule, only a few aging players were allowed to play abroad, nearly half the present team are foreign-based.

Macala and his assistant Milan Leskic have spent much time abroad watching the form of overseas players.

"We have put together a squad that I think contains the best

players available and I hope to be able to field a strong team Wednesday," Macala said.

He has called up nine players who are technically midfielders but versatile in attack and defence.

"One can no longer stick to this rigid classification," Macala said. "Vaclav Nemecek, a midfielder in Toulouse, is also a defender while Leverkusen's Pavel Hapal and Labovir Moravcik from St. Etienne are typical strikers."

Goalkeeper Jan Stejskal, who plays for Premier League side Queens' Park Rangers in England, has plenty of experience of the sort of aerial play favoured by the Belgian players.

Belgian coach Paul Van Himst is expected to field a five-man defensive lineup but still fancies his team's chances.

"This team is too good to remain in front of its goal for one-and-a-half hours," he said. "We know we'll be put under pressure for most of the game but that's logical in a game between two candidates for the finals."

Belgian forward Marc Degryse.

Milan aims to keep Italian title

ROME (R) — A reinforced AC Milan have the quality to become the first team in over a decade to defend successfully the Italian title when a new season in the world's most glamorous league kicks off Sunday.

Not content with strolling undefeated to the title last season, Milan have invested massively to create a squad to retain the title and repeat the European Cup triumphs they enjoyed in 1989 and 1990.

French Marksman Jean-Pierre Papin and Yugoslav midfielder Dejan Savicevic have joined the Milanese foreign legion while the club paid Torino a cool \$16 million for winger Gianluigi Lentini, not yet even a regular in the national side.

The financial muscle of media magnate president Silvio Berlusconi has given Milan coach Fabio Capello a huge "dream squad" from which two distinct high-class teams could be selected for any match.

But the dream could turn sour for Capello who must decide which of his big stars plays when. Life is made harder for the coach, aiming to build on a superb first season in charge at Milan, by the fact that he can field only three foreign players at a time in league matches.

That leaves Papin, Savicevic and the Croat midfielder Zvonimir Boban to scrap for places with the established Dutch trio of Marco Van Basten, Ruud Gullit and Frank Rijkaard.

Milan's rivals have been quick to point out this surplus of talent could spark discontent and undermine the club as they seek to become the first team to win successive league titles since Juventus in 1982.

"The foreign players are a time a bomb for Milan," said veteran

coach Vujadin Boskov, who has moved from Sampdoria to Roma during the close season.

"Leaving a player like Savicevic in the stands will create great tensions. And I only refer to Savicevic because he is a player I know," he added.

Capello naturally dismisses such fears.

"Within our squad the rules are clear. The player who is the most in form, who can offer most to the team, will play."

"And given the commitments we have, with more than 60 games between the championship, various cups and friendlies, I'm sure there will be room for all."

Juventus, runners-up last season, have also spent huge sums as they seek to bridge the eight-point gap which separated them from Milan last May.

Italian striker Gianluca Vialli has joined them from Sampdoria in a deal valued at a world record \$20 million and the signings of England's David Platt and Andy Moeller of Germany are certain to strengthen their midfield.

The Turin side, champions a record 22 times but without a league title since 1986, will spearhead a challenge to Milan in which Lazio and Napoli should figure prominently too.

Internazionale, still smarting from their failure to qualify for European competition for the first time since 1975, have dispensed with the German trio of Juergen Klinsmann, Andreas Brehme and Lothar Matthaus.

Their replacements include former Red Star Belgrade marksman Darko Panecov and gifted Russian midfielder Igor Shalimov while Italy's 1990 World Cup hero Salvatore Schillaci will attempt to revive his flagging career after joining Inter from

Juventus.

Napoli, fourth last season, appear well-equipped for another good campaign providing their contractual row with Diego Maradona does not prove too much of a distraction.

Roma will be disappointed if they fail to improve on last year's fifth place while 1991 champions Sampdoria are certain to view a UEFA Cup spot as the least of their ambitions.

Milan captain Franco Baresi, recently tipped Dino Zoff as a modelled Lazio as the best outside bet for the title.

Lazio's fortunes will mostly depend on newly-acquired English virtuoso Paul Gascoigne, who has been long nursing a knee injury and is an uncertain starter in the initial league rounds.

Norwich go top of league

LONDON (R) — Norwich took over as English Premier League leaders after topping Nottingham Forest 3-1 with two late goals. Strikers by Lee Power and David Phillips in the last 13 minutes secured the home win that lifted Norwich two points clear of Blackburn at the top. It was Forest's fourth consecutive defeat following their victory over Liver-

pool on the opening weekend of the league season — the club's worst start since Brian Clough became manager in 1975. Norwich made the perfect start when Ian Crook clipped home a 20-minute free kick in the second minute, but forward Nigel Clough rounded off a superb move to equalise after 32 minutes.

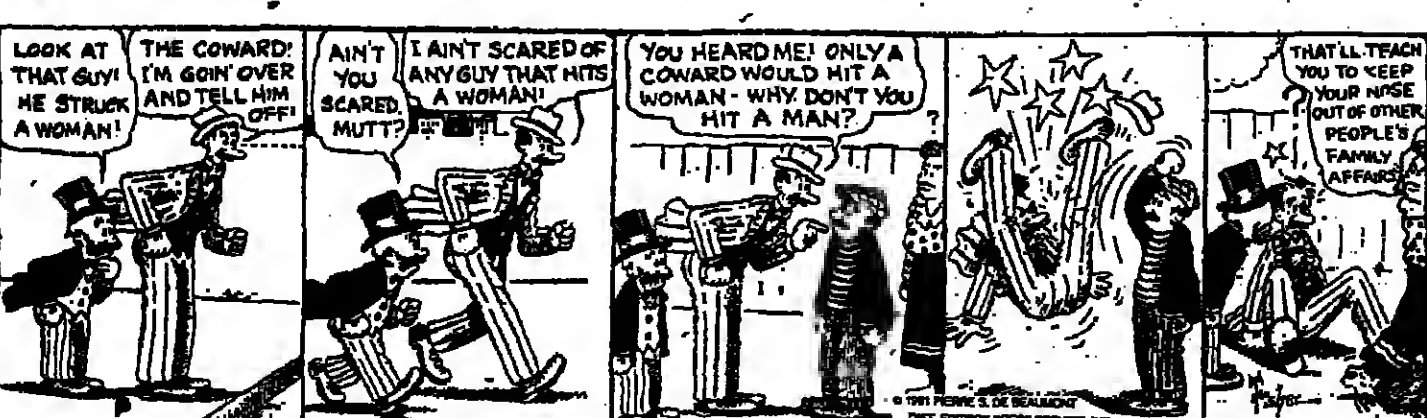
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 2, 1992
By Thomas S. Plerson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Don't be tempted to break up a good and beneficial situation now in effect and trade it for an unknown quantity if your decision is based on the advice of a well meaning friend or associate.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) A good time to invite those into your home who have a sense of humor and who can bring you some information and news that you have been seeking.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Don't let a misleading message from afar upset you and get into duties of a surroundings nature that face you in accord with routine allies.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Attend to whatever material or financial questions that face you today and don't bring them to the attention of one who has own axes to grind.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) An associate can confuse you about the course of action for you to take to gain your personal ambitions but your own judgement is better.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Look for a better means by which to build up your secret ambitions and sidestep the suggestions of a fellow associate who does not know your exact position.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Think over what friends can be best helpful to you in attaining

practical goals and don't let the prejudices of your attachment get in your way in doing so.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) All kinds of interesting new outlets can come into your life if you now display an open mind and do not let a routine condition get in the way.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) All kinds of interesting new outlets can come into your life if you now display an open mind and do not let a routine condition get in the way.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Obligations you have assumed and promises made to other persons should be your order of the day so don't go after what you want until these are fulfilled.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Other people are now willing to go along with what you wish but it is necessary that you know just what you are after and state plainly.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) A private anxiety you allow to occupy your thoughts could be the only condition keeping you from making a big success of your regular activities.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) A fine day to make those engagements and appointments with congenial companions for recreations and entertainment of a mutual pleasant nature.

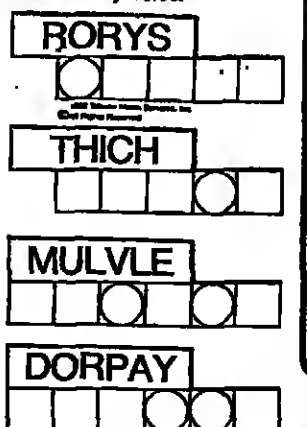
THE BETTER HALF

By Harris



JUMBLE

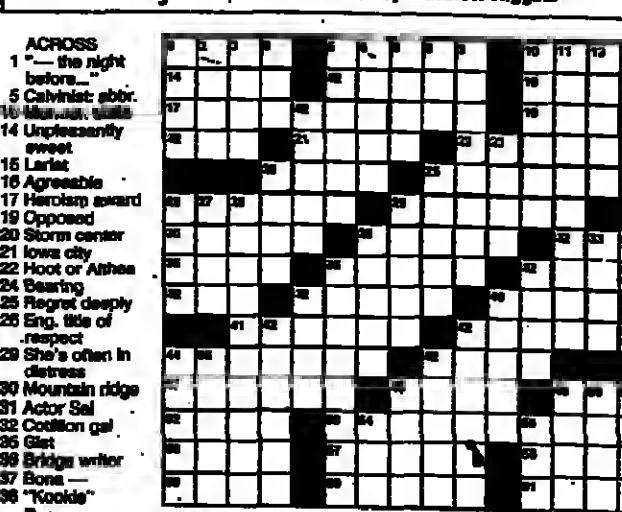
Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: IN THE (Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: QUOTA CROAK KENNEL DEPICT
Answer: A person sometimes goes to a shrink for a checkup --- FROM THE NECK UP

THE Daily Crossword by Matthew Higgins



Yesterday's Puzzle Solution



42. Fly
43. Husbandman
44. Amused
45. expression
46. Concerning sound quality
47. Knight's weapon
48. Gray piece
49. High-ranking
50. Chosen
51. Well-known
52. San Francisco
53.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HIRSCH
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TOMMY AND THE DIAMOND MERCHANT

Neither vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ 9 8 3
♥ 6 2
♦ 8 4 2
♣ A 7 5 4 3

EAST
♠ K J 6 5 4 2
♥ A 10 8 3
♦ Q 10 7 5
♣ Q 6

SOUTH
♠ A
♥ K Q 7 4
♦ A K J 6 6
♣ K 8 8

The bidding:
North East South West
Pass 2 ♠ Dbl Pass
2 NT Pass 3 ♠ Pass
4 ♠ Pass 4 ♠ Pass
5 ♠ Pass 5 ♠ Pass
Pass Pass

Opening lead: Seven of ♠

The diamond merchant from Amsterdam was a good player. At the club, however, he was at some what of a disadvantage—he did not know his opponents. Regulars would have told him that you never double Trump Coup Tommy with a trump stack, an action he took with the West hand. A bad trump break would transform an otherwise ordinary player, which describes Tommy kindly, into the Hulk Hogan of the bridge table.

In theory, North's response of two no trump repeated South to bid three clubs, a new gadget Tommy and partner were using to get out on weak hands. When Tommy showed a powerful hand with a spade cue-bid, then corrected to diamonds, North decided that three trumps, an ace and a ruffing value were sufficient to go on to game.

The diamond merchant's double brought a gleam to Tommy's eye. After winning the opening lead in hand, Tommy led the king of hearts to West's ace. The Dutchman was too shrewd a player to shorten Tommy's trumps by leading another spade. Instead, West shifted to the queen of clubs.

Tommy won with the ace and, not bothering with a trump finesse that was sure to lose, ruffed a spade, cashed the queen of hearts and ruffed a heart in dummy. Another spade ruff saved the entry for a heart ruff with the eight. When East could not overruff, Tommy was ready for the grand finale.

After cashing the king of clubs, Tommy exited with a club. Down to nothing but trumps, West was forced to ruff and lead away from the queen into declarer's A K J holding. Just another ho-hum hand for Tommy!

Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	NEW YORK CLOSE	TOKYO CLOSE
U.S. Dollar	1.9880	1.9887
Deutsche Mark	1.4028	1.4020
Swiss Franc	1.2500	1.2445
French Franc	4.7820	4.7810**
Japanese Yen	123.10	123.05
European Currency Unit	1.4410	1.4417**

* 100 Per 100

** European Opening @ 8:00 A.M. GMT

Eurocurrency Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.37	3.37	3.50	3.62
Sterling Pound	10.23	10.43	10.56	10.62
Deutsche Mark	9.73	9.73	9.73	9.73
Swiss Franc	7.73	7.73	7.73	7.68
French Franc	10.25	10.43	10.54	10.56
Japanese Yen	4.21	5.81	5.81	5.81
European Currency Unit	11.18	11.25	11.25	11.12

Interest rate for 100 units of U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	3.37	3.37	3.50	3.62
Sterling Pound	10.23	10.43	10.56	10.62
Deutsche Mark	9.73	9.73	9.73	9.73
Swiss Franc	7.73	7.73	7.73	7.68
French Franc	10.25	10.43	10.54	10.56
Japanese Yen	4.21	5.81	5.81	5.81
European Currency Unit	11.18	11.25	11.25	11.12

Interest rate for 100 units of U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent

* 100 Per 100

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Date: 1/9/92

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.663	0.665
Sterling Pound	1.3167	1.3233
Deutsche Mark	0.4720	0.4744
Swiss Franc	0.3313	0.3342
French Franc	0.1384	0.1391
Japanese Yen	0.5384	0.5411
Dutch Guilder	0.4183	0.4206
Swedish Krona	0.1291	0.1297
Italian Lira	0.0618	0.0621
Belgian Franc	0.02289	0.02300

* 100 Per 100

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7300	1.7400
Lebanese Lira	0.0865	0.0895
Saudi Riyal	0.1762	0.1780
Kuwaiti Dinar	2.2300	2.3100
Qatari Riyal	0.1796	0.1810
Egyptian Pound	0.2000	0.2100
Omani Rial	1.6960	1.7100
UAE Dirham	0.1796	0.1810
Greek Drachma	0.3725	0.3830
Cypriot Pound	1.6125	1.6360

* 100 Per 100

CAB Indices for Amman Financial Markets

Index	30/8/92	Close	31/8/92	Close
All-Share	140.90		141.37	
Banking Sector	104.64		104.89	
Insurance Sector	147.47		147.70	
Industry Sector	190.32		191.36	
Services Sector	188.03		190.89	

December 31, 1990 = 100

Chinese banks plan overseas expansion

BEIJING (AP) — China is encouraging its banks to open branches abroad to help raise capital for the nation's ambitious modernisation programme, an official newspaper has said.

The China Daily said the overseas expansion plan was the subject of debate within the central bank for months. Supporters said it would help attract investment funds and ease trade transactions.

Now that the central bank has approved the strategy, Chinese banks are lining up to get permission to open branches, the paper said.

The People's Construction Bank of China is seeking to open branches in Japan and Singapore, while the Industrial and Commercial Bank wants to move into Kazakhstan and upgrade its Singapore office to a branch bank, the paper said.

For decades, the only bank allowed to have branches abroad was the Bank of China. A very few other banks have been allowed to open branches in key foreign capitals since China began encouraging foreign trade and investment in 1978, but the government's priority has been maintaining tight control over international transactions.

China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, opened its first overseas office in June in London.

The Bank of China received permission in July to open an office in Seoul. Meanwhile, more foreign banks will be allowed to open branches in China, the China Daily said. About 47 foreign banks have been allowed to open branches in recent months in selected coastal cities, and about 30 others have applied to do so.

White House opposes further dollar drop

WASHINGTON (R) — The White House Monday rejected Democratic charges that the dollar's recent steep drop was due to a lack of investor confidence in President George Bush's economic programme, and said it does not want the currency to fall further.

"The United States is not seeking a decline in the dollar and does not believe that a lower dollar is necessary for its export competitiveness," White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater told a regular daily news conference.

The dollar fell to record lows against the surging German mark last week despite attempts by the United States and its allies to prop it up on world currency markets.

The lower dollar is bad news for U.S. tourists travelling in Europe because it immediately boosts the cost of their holiday, but is good news for U.S. exporters because it makes them more competitive on world markets.

Democratic vice-presidential candidate Al Gore Sunday blamed what he called Bush's "incoherent" policies and lack of economic vision for the dollar's steep fall against the mark.

The Tennessee senator traced the dollar's decline back to Mr. Bush's promise at the Republican Party convention last month of an across-the-board tax cut if he was re-elected.

"It was incoherent. The campaign said coherence can come later, but the markets want coherence now," Mr. Gore told ABC television.

But Mr. Fitzwater rejected that charge, and instead laid most of the blame for the dollar's decline on the wide spread between higher German and lower U.S. interest rates.

"German interest rates are at traditionally very high levels, while the United States has reduced its interest rates to the lowest levels in roughly 25 years," he said.

Mr. Fitzwater made clear that the United States does not want to see the dollar fall any further, saying that U.S. exports are already at record levels and do not need any help from a weaker currency.

But he sidestepped questions as to whether the Bush administration thought the Germans should lower their interest rates to help strengthen the U.S. dollar.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) urged the United States Monday to take tough action to rein in its budget deficit, but no one seemed to be listening.

Monetary sources said IMF staffers argued at a meeting of the fund's board that a cut in the deficit would be good for both the United States and the world economy.



Martin Fitzwater

nommy, and advocated tax hikes and spending reductions to help bring that about.

But neither President Bush nor Democratic Party challenger Bill Clinton have shown much inclination to prescribe such painful medicine in the run-up to the Nov. 3 election.

"The economic programmes unveiled by President Bush and (Arkansas) Governor Clinton (have) a common theme," said Hans Tran, economist with Deutsche Bank, Germany's largest bank. "Despite paying lip service to the contrary, no priority... has been accorded to reduction of the U.S. budget deficit."

The U.S. deficit is expected to soar to a record \$314 billion in 1991/92 and economists say it

must be tackled to ensure America's future competitiveness.

They argue that a lower budget deficit would free up money for use by U.S. business, bring down interest rates and promote to long-term economic growth.

Some economists believe that the deficit could fall next year as U.S. economic growth picks up and government tax revenues increase. The IMF expects U.S. growth to accelerate to 3.4 per cent next year from 2.1 per cent in 1992.

But faster economic growth alone will not be enough to eliminate the deficit and the IMF believes that tough action to cut spending and raise taxes is needed as well.

Mr. Bush has rejected any talk of increasing taxes and has called for an across-the-board tax cut balanced by commensurate reductions in federal spending.

"The deficit outlook is bleak," said the bipartisan Congressional Budget Office in a report last month.

To cut the budget shortfall, Mr. Bush has proposed letting Americans designate up to 10 per cent of their taxes for deficit reduction by checking a box on their tax returns.

"The president's check-off box is a gimmick," Texas tycoon and former independent presidential candidate Ross Perot wrote Sunday in the New York Times news-

paper. But the trouble, economists said, is that Mr. Clinton does not have a solid plan to reduce the deficit either.

Meanwhile, U.S. sales of new homes dropped 2.6 per cent in July and industry analysts said the decline showed consumers were too anxious about the economy to take advantage of the biggest financing breaks in years.

Sales fell to a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 563,000 units, the U.S. government said Monday, despite cheaper interest rates and the lowest average price in 3-1/2 years.

"This kind of tug-of-war between cheaper rates on the one hand and a weak job market and falling consumer confidence on the other hand is turning into a standoff," said economist David Seiders of the National Association of Home Builders.

"The overall economy is clearly still sagging and so is the housing market," Mr. Seiders commented.

New home sales are regarded as a good measure of consumer's readiness to make long-term investments. July's unexpected fall reflects pervasive economic uneasiness with November presidential elections approaching.

Wall Street economists had forecast sales of new homes would rise to an annual rate of 580,000 instead of fall.

Gulf Air buys 6 Airbus for \$500m

MANAMA (R) — Bahrain-based Gulf Air said Monday it would spend \$500 million on six Airbus A-340s for delivery in 1994 and was taking options on another six of the same aircraft.

"From today we are making our orders — what we are committed to is six A340 aircraft only but we maintain options on six more, at the same price," president and

chief executive Salim Bin Ali, Bin Naser Asiyabi told reporters. Mr. Asiyabi said the aircraft would be powered by General Electric Engines. The purchase is in addition to ambitious plans by Gulf Air to invest a total of \$1.7 billion over the next three years on 18 new aircraft, flights to 10 new destinations and more facilities and personnel. Bankers say most of the investment will be

raised through borrowing. Gulf Air, owned by the governments of Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the emirate of Abu Dhabi, made a record net 1991 profit of 18 million dinars (\$48 million) despite the Gulf war. The airline plans to raise its paid-in capital from 64 million dinars (\$170 million) now to attain a reasonable capital to debt ratio.

Saudi report sees rapid consumer market growth

DUBAI (R) — An affluent, fast-growing population will bring dramatic growth to Saudi Arabia's consumer market in the next few years, a report published Monday by the kingdom's National Commercial Bank said.

Growing numbers of young, better-educated and increasingly well-off Saudis will mean higher demand for financial services, cars, luxury accessories and sporting goods, said the report by Henry Azzam, chief economist of the kingdom's largest bank.

"With the kingdom experiencing one of the world's highest population growth rates, with large and rising disposable income, there will be a growing market for a whole range of consumer goods," it said.

The report said population would climb to over 19 million by the year 2000, from a U.N. estimate of 14 million in 1990.

Saudi nationals then accounted for around 65 per cent, with the remainder made up of foreign workers and their families.

Per capita income in the kingdom is one of the highest in the world. The report put it at \$6,500

in 1990, and said that after relatively strained economic conditions in the 1980s, Saudis were once again feeling more affluent.

Fundamental changes in social habits would also have an effect on future consumer demand, it said.

Smaller family units are gradually replacing the extended family structure and multiple households belonging to one man, who is allowed more than one wife under Islamic law.

Similarly, greater access to education for girls would soon lead to a larger female labour force, increasing exposure of women to international consumer trends and purchasing patterns.

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WORLD STOCK MARKETS

LONDON — Stock prices closed lower after an uninspired day of trading, with the London market preoccupied by sterling weakness and the approaching September 20 French referendum on the Maastricht Treaty, equity strategists said. The FTSE 100 index ended 14.2 points down at 2,296.4, just above a session low of 2,296.5.

FRANKFURT — The dollar's renewed tumble and a gloomy forecast about the nation's economy from a business leader sent German shares falling 1.3 per cent Tuesday. The 30-share Dax index lost 22.55 points to 1,518.70, virtually wiping out Monday's 24.78-point gain.

PARIS — Leading French shares closed moderately lower as investors spent another day mesmerised by the forthcoming vote on the Maastricht Treaty on European union. The CAC-40 index ended 10.65 points, or 0.63 per cent, lower at 1,674.23 on paltry volume of 1.15 billion francs.

ZURICH — Swiss shares ended a moderately active session slightly lower. Dealers said a firm Wall Street opening and positive news on inflation trends helped to offset the low dollar's negative impact.

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Fresh battles erupt in Sarajevo

SARAJEVO (R) — Serb and Muslim forces fought battles around the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo Tuesday and the city echoed to the crash of shells and gunfire, despite peace pledges at international talks.

A column of black smoke plumed over the city following a military strike near the headquarters of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) while mortar and machinegun fire reverberated across the city from the area of the airport.

Heavy fighting raged through the night after Serb forces opposed to Bosnia's independence from Yugoslavia staged a new thrust against the mainly Muslim defenders in Hrasno, a southern suburb.

A Serb advance of only a few hundred metres at Hrasno, a once-affluent district of high-rise buildings, would threaten the city's main east-west highway.

Local journalists also reported heavy shelling in the suburbs of Dobrinja and Alipasino Polje from Serb forces based at Lukavica, while Bosnian forces shelled Serb positions from Mount Igman.

Sources at the Defence Ministry said Bosnian forces were advancing towards Hadzici and Ilidza, to the southeast of

Sarajevo. Street fighting was reported in Ilidza, scene of fierce clashes, Monday night.

Two people were killed and about 25 people were wounded in Serb shelling of Dobrinja, the journalists said.

The renewed fighting apparently made nonsense of pledges by the warring sides at international peace talks in London last week to act to end five months of fighting in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Nearly 9,000 people have been killed in the violence which erupted in April after the mountainous territory declared its independence from the Yugoslav Federation.

Bosnia's Serbs, who have seized huge tracts of territory from the relatively poorly-armed Muslim forces, undertook in London to withdraw from a substantial portion of territory.

They also pledged to group their heavy artillery, which has wrought havoc among Bosnia's civilian population, around Sarajevo, Bihać, Gorazde and Jajce and put them under U.N. control.

Western diplomats said, however, that there appeared to be little chance of this happening until the fighting had significantly subsided.

The Serb army reported it had broken an offensive by Croat-Muslim forces which it said had been launched 10 days ago in eastern Herzegovina aimed at rolling back Serb forces.

Serb army headquarters, reported by the Belgrade-based news agency Tanjug, said Croat-Muslim forces had surrendered territory around Trebinje and Mostar.

In Belgrade, Yugoslav Prime Minister Milan Panic geared himself for a major political fight to withstand a parliamentary vote of no-confidence tabled Monday by backers of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic.

Supporters of Mr. Milosevic, with whom Mr. Panic is at loggerheads over the Yugoslav crisis, tabled the vote, accusing Mr. Panic of betraying Serbia's interests at the London talks.

"The irony, the tragedy of it all is that Panic, who alone managed to avoid Serbia being put on trial, should himself be put on one by Serbs in Belgrade," said a close aide.

The move by 68 legislators of the Socialist and Radical Parties which control the federal parliament followed public rebukes to Mr. Milosevic from Mr. Panic at the London talks.

The West perceives the moder-

ate Panic as a potential saviour for Serbia who could bring it back into the world community after its ostracism over the Bosnian independence crisis.

The parliamentary debate on the vote could take place as early as Friday. Western officials have warned that his removal from power could derail the international peace process.

"There is little possibility that parliament will vote no confidence in Panic because it would be an outright suicidal move on their part," said the aide.

Supporters of the no-confidence motion say Mr. Panic went beyond his mandate in London and compromised the position of Serbs in now-independent Croatia and the Albanian-dominated region of Kosovo.

Peace talks sponsored by the United Nations and the European Community are to resume in Geneva Thursday.

U.N. envoy Cyrus Vance told a news conference Monday that he hoped to galvanise the diplomatic machinery to bring peace to Bosnia.

But Mr. Vance, co-chairman of a new United Nations-EC steering group set up in London last week, said: "It's going to be hard going."

Dubcek seriously hurt in accident

PRAGUE (R) — Alexander Dubcek, leader of the 1968 Prague Spring, was seriously hurt in a car accident Tuesday and a doctor said he might have a broken spine, pelvis and ribs, the Czechoslovak State News Agency (CSTK) said.

Mr. Dubcek's car plunged into a ravine from a motorway 100 kilometres south east of Prague, the agency said.

He was first taken to hospital in Jihlava and after his condition was stabilised he was flown to Prague, it added. The accident threatens to remove Mr. Dubcek from active politics at a crucial moment as the country hastily

prepares to split into two independent states on Jan. 1, 1993.

Mr. Dubcek, 70, was ousted from public life following the 1968 Soviet-led invasion which crushed his reformist "Socialism with a human face." He endured 20 years in disgrace.

He returned to politics as chairman of Czechoslovakia's parliament during the "velvet revolution" of late 1989 which swept away hardline Communist rule, and he campaigned actively but unsuccessfully to preserve the federation.

For more than two years he was chairman of the Czechoslovak parliament, overseeing a slow and often painful march towards

democracy.

He now heads Slovakia's Social Democrats and has been mentioned as a possible candidate for the Slovak presidency, to be created by the region's parliament.

"We have enough demagogues and eccentrics of various sorts on both the left and right of the political spectrum," the then Czechoslovak president, playwright and former dissident Václav Havel, said after Mr. Dubcek joined the Social Democrats.

"We must therefore rejoice when a reasonable man, who does his best for his country and is open to agreement and dialogue, appears on one or the other side."

Scandal spotlight turns to Miyazawa cabinet

TOKYO (R) — The spotlight in a spreading corruption scandal turned Tuesday on Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa's cabinet amid reports that three ministers might be questioned by prosecutors about their role in the affair.

The Sagawa scandal, the third to hit the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in as many years, could undermine the party's recent favourable election showing and cause political instability, analysts said.

Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa moved swiftly to clear his own name after the resignation Tuesday of a prominent politician linked to the scandal, the second in just five days.

"I have never taken (Sagawa funds)," Mr. Miyazawa told reporters, adding that he did not know any executives of Sagawa Kyubin, the delivery trucking firm at the centre of the scandal probe.

Nilgata Governor Kiyoshi Kaneko announced on Tuesday he was stepping down after reports that he took 300 million yen (\$2.4 million) for his 1989 election campaign in unexplained Sagawa funds.

Just last Thursday Shin Kanemaru, the country's most powerful politician, said he was quitting as LDP vice-president after admitting he took 500 million yen.

Mr. Miyazawa told reporters none of his aides or political secretaries had ever been on the Sagawa payroll.

Yet Kiyoshi Sagawa, former chairman of the trucking firm, said in a television interview earlier this year his aides had paid the salaries of companies to some 280 politicians nationwide.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

China arrests exiled student leader

PEKING (R) — China Tuesday arrested the first student leader of the 1989 pro-democracy protests to return from exile after he spent a month travelling the country building an organisation, family members and associates said. Shen Tong, 24, was arrested along with two Chinese companions early Tuesday morning shortly before a scheduled news conference. Mr. Shen's family members said, two French journalists travelling with Mr. Shen were detained briefly and put on a plane to Hong Kong, according to Ross Terrell, an American scholar of China who is a member of the advisory board of Mr. Shen's U.S.-based Democracy for China Fund. Mr. Shen, a leader in the 1989 pro-democracy movement crushed by China's army, travelled the country meeting with members of the underground Democracy Movement, dissidents, intellectuals and former officials. Mr. Terrell, who came to Peking to witness Mr. Shen's return, told reporters.

French Socialists alone in referendum

AVIGNON, France (R) — France's ruling Socialists are isolated, exhausted, unpopular and gloomy as they struggle to save the Maastricht Treaty of European union from defeat in a referendum this month. If the "no" vote triumphs on Sept. 20, the broad public rejection of President Francois Mitterrand's party after 11 years in power may be the decisive factor. The treaty, which aims to build a common foreign and security policy among the 12 European Community states, has already been narrowly rejected by Danish voters in a June referendum, and a "no" vote by France would effectively kill it. The latest opinion poll released Monday suggested a swing back towards the "yes" vote, credited with 53 per cent support, after three polls last week predicting the "no" votes would win. This week's Socialist Party annual summer school reflected the dejection and ideological exhaustion of a party which won only 18.3 per cent of the vote in regional elections in March.

Blast rips through Greek refinery

ATHENS (AP) — An explosion and fire ripped through the Petrolia Oil Refinery near Athens Tuesday, killing one employee and injuring 25 officials said. The cause of the blast at the refinery's naphtha and jet production units was not immediately clear. After the fire was extinguished, one charred body was found. Said Fire Brigade Chief Constantine Arkoudos. Another 25 people were injured, 17 of them seriously, said Yannis Pteroulakos, secretary general of the Health Ministry. The explosion occurred at 7:20 a.m. (0420 GMT) at the refinery in Elefsis, 24 kilometres east of Athens on the Bay of Elefsis. The refinery's storage tanks were not damaged.

3 crewmen killed in Angola air crash

JOHANNESBURG (R) — Three crewmen were killed when a plane carrying journalists to South Africa crashed in southern Angola late Monday night, the aircraft's owners said Tuesday. Bob Garbett, managing director of Professional Aviation, said two journalists were seriously hurt "but their injuries are not life-threatening." The passengers were treated at a bush hospital at Jamba, former wartime headquarters of Angola's main opposition UNITA movement, before being flown to wonderboom Air Base near Pretoria. Seven of the journalists were taken to Pretoria's F.W. Verwoerd Hospital for checks but the hospital's chief superintendent Dirk Van Rony said no-one there was badly hurt. Mr. Garbett said 16 journalists were aboard, but passengers on the plane said there were only 14.

Former east German spy master arrested

KARLSRUHE, Germany (R) — One of former east Germany's leading counter-intelligence experts has been arrested on charges of treason and fraud, the federal prosecutor's office announced. Former Lieutenant-General Guntar Kratsch, 61, frequently held clandestine meetings with his west German spies who gave him top secret material on Western nuclear forces, it said. He was also responsible for the confiscation of about 30 million marks (\$21 million) sent by post between East Germany and the West, it added. The prosecutor's office said Gen. Kratsch was suspected of running spies in west Germany, a charge that may not be illegal under the 1990 unity treaty that merged east and west Germany. The treaty states east Germans must be tried under east German law, under which espionage against Bonn was no crime, and some lawyers argue east Germans could not have betrayed west Germany during the cold war since it was not their state.

U.S. army pitches tents for Florida homeless

MIAMI (R) — Navy ships loaded with tonnes of food and construction materials steamed into south Florida as army troops pitched long-awaited canvas tents for homeless families camping out among mounds of steamy garbage.

President George Bush said he would again visit areas of Florida and Louisiana Tuesday hit by hurricane Andrew, the costliest natural disaster in U.S. history, which killed 40 people, made tens of thousands homeless and damaged property estimated at about \$30 billion.

The White House, sensitive to the mood of voters in an election year, has been working to fend off critics who had complained that Washington failed to respond quickly to one of the worst natural disasters in the nation's history.

While Mr. Bush rushed to the disaster scene in Florida last Monday within hours after the storm struck, he did not order federal troops to the area until Thursday, after they were requested by Florida's governor.

The troops did not arrive until Friday, after local officials overwhelmed by the tragedy were virtually begging for help.

The White House has been clearly irritated by suggestions by some officials and media commentators that Mr. Bush did not respond as quickly to the crisis on his own shores as he did to Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

Mr. Bush was slated to depart Washington early Tuesday for an inspection tour arranged so quickly that it caught White House officials off guard when Mr. Bush told reporters of his plans while posing for photographers Monday.

Saying there's "still an awful lot of human suffering" in the storm's wake, Mr. Bush vowed to "move forward as fast as we can to help alleviate that."

"I think progress is being made," Mr. Bush said. "And now we need to follow up with our agencies and departments in every way that we possibly can to assist the victims of this storm."

Although Mr. Bush and his aides deny that any political considerations are involved in the high-visibility role taken by the president in dealing with the disaster, certain election-year realities cannot be ignored.

Florida may be the most solidly Republican state in the south in terms of presidential politics. For Mr. Bush its 25 electoral votes are key to a victory in November — especially since he is threatened with the loss of California and possibly even Texas, key voter-rich states.



An Abkhaz National Guardsman waits to fire on Georgian forces during fighting in the autonomous republic.

Karabakh truce generally holds

BAKU, Azerbaijan (R) — A senior Azeri Defence Ministry official Tuesday accused Armenia of abusing a ceasefire in the disputed enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, using the break to move up weapons and troops.

Further west in Georgia, the secessionist region of Abkhazia reported bitter fighting with government forces after a ceasefire collapsed in another part of the volatile Transcaucasus.

"On Monday our intelligence reported a major build-up of Armenian forces along the border between Armenia and Azerbaijan," Azeri Defence Ministry spokeswoman Leyla Yunusova said in an interview.

"This ceasefire is of no benefit to us at all. A ceasefire is not enough — we need a political settlement."

The ceasefire appeared to be holding but both Azerbaijan and Armenia accused each other of shelling positions overnight.

Ms. Yunusova said it was pointless arranging ceasefire until there was a method of enforcing them.

"We need a durable peace and not a temporary ceasefire that can be used to prepare for more intensive military activities and bloodshed," she said.

She said the Armenians had moved 500 men, five tanks, four armoured personnel carriers and two rocket batteries into one front-line position alone in the last day and similar build-ups had been noticed in other regions.

Azeri and Armenian officials reached agreement late last month on a ceasefire in the four-year-old conflict that has cost over 2,000 lives. But fierce fighting

ing continued up to the eve of the Sept. 1 deadline.

The Azeri Defence Ministry said earlier there had been no clashes since the midnight ceasefire in the main areas of conflict in the north of Karabakh, an Armenian-populated region fighting for independence from Azerbaijan.

"The main theatre of war remains calm," said a spokesman. "Our Azeri forces have not been killed and more than thirty wounded overnight when Armenian forces shelled Azerbaijan's Jeyraill district."

Gagik Avakyan, an Armenian National Security Ministry official, said Azeri forces had shelled several towns in and around the enclave in the early hours.

"There was shelling, but no attacks on the Armenian positions," he said from the Armenian capital Yerevan. An Armenian presidential spokesman said two people had been killed by shells in the Karabakh town of Martuni.

Meanwhile in Georgia, a spokeswoman for the Abkhazian parliament in Gndanta, reached by telephone from Moscow, said a fierce battle was raging for the Black Sea coastal town of Esberry further south.

"In other areas, the two sides are in the same positions, shelling each other with everything possible," she said.

The Georgian military commander in the Abkhazian town of Gagra, focus of recent fighting, earlier said the region was quiet after two days of bitter clashes which killed at least 30 people and shattered a new ceasefire.

17 die in Sri Lanka marketplace blast

COLOMBO (R) — At least 17 people were killed and 20 wounded when a bomb hidden inside an ice-cream can fixed to a bicycle blasted a crowded eastern Sri Lanka marketplace Tuesday, a senior army officer said.

The officer said the bomb was planted by Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam guerrillas.

The casualties could rise after the blast at Sainthamarathin village, about 240 kilometres east of Colombo, a military spokesman at Colombo's Joint Operations Command said.

Two senior government ministers who represent the eastern

Ampara district, where the incident occurred, were flown to the village late Tuesday.

The Tigers, fighting for their own Tamil homeland in the north and the east, often plant bombs in crowded public areas.

Meanwhile Sri Lanka's Supreme Court unanimously rejected Tuesday an opposition petition to declare the 1988 election of President Ranasinghe Premadasa null and void.

After a 527-day hearing, the Supreme Court judges threw out a petition by opposition leader Sirima Bandaranaike calling for the De-

cember 1988 poll to be declared null and void because widespread violence prevented many voters going to polls.

Tuesday's verdict, delivered in a courtroom complex ringed by armed police, was greeted by firecrackers from Mr. Premadasa's supporters.

Security was tightened across the city. Mr. Premadasa and Mrs. Bandaranaike were not in court. The case, filed in January 1989, was concluded in June this year. There were 977 witnesses and 27,000 pages of evidence were recorded.

However, Bush campaign spokeswoman Torie Clarke said that Mr. Clinton's defence cuts — which are double Mr. Bush's would cost 1 million jobs and his health care plan would cost another 700,000. Tax increases on business would wipe out another 300,000, she said.

Ms. Clarke said it was credible for her to criticise Mr. Clinton's pledge — even though Mr. Bush has fallen way short in his 1988 pledge to create 15 million jobs in the first term — because Mr. Clinton's economic plan won't work.

Meanwhile, Mr. Clinton gained strength in a national poll released Monday while President Bush slipped from his post-convention level.

The latest ABC-News-Washington Post poll shows Mr. Clinton with 55 per cent support to Mr. Bush's 36 per cent.

The two were nearly even following the Republican national convention, Aug. 17-20. Since a poll taken for the same organisations immediately after the convention, Mr. Clinton gained eight percentage points and Mr. Bush lost six.

The survey released Monday was taken by telephone on Aug. 26-30 among 768 registered voters. The margin of error was plus or minus 4.5 percentage points.

The poll suggested that the shifting allegiances of independent voters — who apparently leaned towards Bush last week and are now back in Mr. Clinton's corner — are partly responsible for the swing in poll numbers.

COLUMN

Male au pair gets reprieve from deportation

LONDON (R) — A Swedish male au-pair (home-help) threatened with deportation from Britain because he is not a woman was given a last-minute reprieve Monday, immigration officials said. But Johan Egelstedt, 19, was told he could stay only as a visitor, not as a paid help for the children of the English family that hired him. Immigration officers detained Mr. Egelstedt on his arrival last week under a British rule that says an au pair must be "an unmarried girl aged 17-27 inclusive without dependants." The family that hired him protested vehemently and a Home Office (Interior Ministry) decision to deport him was given extensive press coverage. Home Secretary Kenneth Clarke Monday intervened personally to allow Mr. Egelstedt to stay in England for a month. He was ordered not to work as an au pair during that time but will then be able to apply for a six-month visa extension. "We're delighted but we're still very concerned that this crazy, archaic law does get changed," said Sue Baughan, who hired Mr. Egelstedt to look after her four children.

Lane closed in Sydney tunnel after one day

SYDNEY (AP) — It didn't take long for that bane of all roads, the pothole, to hit Sydney's new harbour tunnel. Just 28 hours after Australian dollar 560-million (\$397 million) structure opened, traffic was disrupted for 45 minutes at the start of the rush hour as crews did a little patch work on one of the four lanes. Roads and Traffic Authority spokesman Bob Dudley said the hole was about 0.6 metres (1 1/2 feet) wide and 3 metres (10 feet) long but only about 2.5 centimetres (an inch) deep. There was no cause for alarm and motorists had experienced a "hump rather than a thump," he said. He said the problem may have been caused by a special mix used to coat the tunnel road to reduce noise.

British transplant girl doing well

PITTSBURGH (R) — A British girl who came to Pittsburgh for a life-saving organ transplant was well enough to sing, laugh and even dance Monday, less than three months after her operation. "I'm feeling well. I like it in America," Laura Davies, 4, told a group of reporters as she sang and danced at a news conference. The girl received a new liver and small intestine in a rare transplant operation at Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh on June 10. Her recovery from the gruelling 15-1/2-hour operation progressed smoothly enough this summer that she was released from the hospital last week, though she is staying in the area in order to have weekly doctor visits. "Her medical condition is quite good. She has recovered quite well from the surgery," said Dr. Andreas Tzakis, director of the Paediatric Transplant Unit at University of Pittsburgh's Medical Center, who led Laura's transplant team.

Ramos wants wives to stop meddling in police work

MANILA (R) — Philippine President Fidel Ramos said he had told police commanders to stop their wives from meddling with police work. "It is yon the generals, the colonels and the commanders (who are) wearing the stars, the insignias, the uniforms and who have the firearms, so you run the organisation, not your wives," Gen. Ramos told a news conference, recounting his meeting with police officers last week. Gen. Ramos did not identify the officers with meddlesome wives or say what the wives were doing. But rumours in Manila coffee shops say a wife of an officer has taken the role of collecting her husband's commissions from illegal gambling syndicates.

Reluctant husbands could face jail for not granting divorce

TEL AVIV (AP) — Jewish men who refuse to grant their wives divorces could soon face serious criminal charges, Israel Television reported. Uri Saram, acting minister for religious affairs, made the promise while addressing a group of "agunot", or abandoned wives, demonstrating outside the Ministry of Religious Affairs. According to Jewish religious law, "which governs the areas of marriage and divorce in Israel, Agunot may not remarry until their husbands agree to divorce them. Any children they have out of wedlock are considered 'mamzerim', or bastards, and their descendants are excommunicated from the Jewish people for ten generations.